



SATURDAY SPECIAL / E4

BUSINESS / B1

WORLD / A19

SPORTS / A21

An enchanted evening
with Tita, Nikki, Jesi, Pilita,
Angie, other friends forever

Peso ends year up 7.6%
against \$; 49.03 highest
in nearly 6 years

Saddam bids family
farewell as he
awaits execution

Pacquiao gets
better offer
from De la Hoya

Janjalani brod gives saliva for DNA testing

By Jocelyn R. Uy, in Manila
and Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

THE JAILED BROTHER OF ABU SAYYAF chieftain Khadaffi Janjalani yesterday agreed to give saliva samples for DNA testing after he was threatened with solitary confinement and removal of his protection from attacks by jail gangs, a prison source said.

JANJALANI/A6



Saturday, December 30, 2006

★★★

6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 22 P18

website: inquirer.net

Head-banging snakes predict China quakes

BEIJING—CHINA HAS come up with an earthquake prediction system which relies on the behavior of snakes, state media said Thursday, two days after two quakes struck off neigh-



HEAD-BANGING/A15

Stocks near 10-year high



FILIPINO traders at the Philippine Stock Exchange at the close of markets on Friday afternoon celebrate the rise of Philippine shares to the best level yet since April 7, 1997 lifted by stocks with rosy growth prospects. The benchmark PSE Index advanced 39.16 points or 1.3 percent, to 2,982.54. The uptrend will persist till next week, say fund managers. REM ZAHORA

Market ends year 42% better than in '05

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez
Business

SHARES SHOT UP TO A near 10-year high yesterday, the last trading day for the year, boosted by hopes of continued economic growth, lower interest rates and robust corporate earnings in 2007, according to fund managers.

From its close in 2005, the market ended the year up by a hefty 42.3 percent.

The Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) index surged 39.16 points or 1.33 percent to 2,982.54 yesterday.

This was the index's best finish since April 7, 1997 when it settled at 2,990.96, the PSE said.

"This is positioning for next year. Investors recognize that the market is poised to breach the 3,000 level," Paul Joseph Garcia, chief investment officer at ING Investment Management Philippines Inc.

The total amount reached P2.92 billion, with 53 gainers and 43 losers.

For the week to Dec. 29, the index rose 4.35 percent or 124.23 points.

There was no trading on Monday and Tuesday which were holidays.

STOCKS/A8

Convicted ex-solon on 'break' from jail

By Jocelyn R. Uy
and Tarra V. Quismundo

INMATES AT ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S most heavily guarded prisons missed murder convict and ex-congressman Jose Villarosa on Christmas Day, which would have been his first behind bars.

INQUIRER sources said the former Occi-

dental Mindoro representative left the maximum security compound of the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City late afternoon of Dec. 24 and had yet to come back from what they believed to be a "holiday break."

NBP Director Vicente Vinarao yesterday denied that Villarosa—a central fig-

CONVICTED/A6

SMITH RELEASED

By Volt Contreras
and Alcuin Papa

HE WAS FREED IN THE DEAD OF night while everyone was in a holiday mood.

US Marine Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, sentenced to 40 years imprisonment after being convicted of raping a Filipino woman, was freed from a Makati jail last night on orders of the Philippine govern-

ment, the US Embassy confirmed.

Embassy spokesperson Matthew Lussenhop said that Smith was moved out of the Makati City Jail to the embassy at about 11 p.m.

"Yes, he has been transferred from the Makati City Jail to US custody consistent with the Visiting Forces Agreement that is binding on the Philippines and the United States," Lussenhop told the INQUIRER.

SMITH/A6



WATCH THE GIRL. The home of Hergielyn Dimagiba in Fairview, Quezon City, from where Valera allegedly came from before his arrest Friday dawn for traffic violation, among other things, was searched by cops.

Cops hold Valera; girl friend's home searched

By Alcuin Papa and DJ Yap

POLICE YESTERDAY ARRESTED and detained Abra Gov. Vicente Valera, a suspect in the killing of Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr., then searched a house he had visited hours earlier where his supposed "girl friend"—reportedly a former model—lives.

Valera said the woman, Hergielyn Dimagiba, was just a "common friend."

But he was not arrested for the Bersamin killing.

The governor was arrested after his vehicle, a Chevrolet Suburban, was flagged down on Com-

monwealth Avenue for traveling without license plates and for using a siren.

Valera is now also facing charges of illegal possession of firearms.

Police were preparing for an inquest last night so that illegal firearms charges could be filed against him.

Seven guns—one HK MP5 9-mm automatic assault rifle and six .45-cal. pistols—were found inside the vehicle in pouch bags. Later, a fragmentation grenade with its pin almost pulled out was found inside the vehicle. But

COPS HOLD/A15

'NOLI,' PENGUIN CLASSICS

Rizal joins ranks of Dickens, Austen

By Joselito B. Zulueta

JOSE RIZAL'S "NOLI ME TANGERE" has been published in a new English translation and released worldwide by Penguin Books, one of the major publishing houses of the English-speaking world, under the Penguin Classics imprint. The publication effectively canonizes the novel as one of the classics of world literature.

It is the first time that a Southeast Asian title has been included in the Penguin Classics, which was started in 1946 with the publication of E.V. Rieu's translation of Homer's "Odyssey."

In the book's blurb, Penguin bills the "Noli" as "the book that sparked the Philippine revolution" and "the great novel of the Philippines."

"[It] was the first major artistic manifestation of Asian resistance to European colonialism, and Rizal became a guiding conscience—and martyr—for the revolution that would subsequently rise up in the Spanish province," Penguin said.

The new translation of the "Noli" was done by an American writer, Harold Augenbraum, a scholar of Hispanic-American letters and the execu-

RIZAL/A8



JUST A TOUCH, but it means a lot to passerby Elmira Calay to be able to do something, anything for the national hero like wiping off the dust on his statue at the Luneta, to honor and thank him on his 110th death anniversary today.

EDWIN BACASMAS

National hero a prisoner of myths

By Ambeth R. Ocampo

LAST JULY, A SEPIA PHOTOGRAPH made the rounds of e-mail and blogs that had the look of archival material and was titled "National Hero."

While most people recognized

that it was Manny Pacquiao's head superimposed with the use of Photoshop techniques on what appeared to be Abraham Lincoln's body, others imagined it to be a long-lost or newly discovered mug shot of the national hero Jose Rizal.

Fortunately, this urban legend was nipped in the bud before it could take on a life of its own. However, some legends never die, like the one that suggested that Rizal fathered Adolf Hitler or, even more fantastic, that our

NATIONAL/A8



WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon and Visayas will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers becoming widespread rains over the Bicol region and the eastern section of Visayas. Mindanao will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms while the rest of the country will be cloudy with rainshowers and thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/12/29/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Halo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Bogulo	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains



STAND UP AND DELIVER. President Macapagal-Arroyo poses for TV cameras during the taping of her New Year's message Friday at The Mansion in Baguio City as one of her security escorts hovers in the background with an umbrella.

LYN RILLON

Malacañang support for Garci whips up political storm

CONTROVERSIAL FORMER ELECTION commissioner Virgilio "Garci" Garcillano is again whipping up a political storm.

The opposition Liberal Party in a statement released yesterday said Malacañang's endorsement of his candidacy for congressman was "like rubbing salt into the festering, unhealed wounds."

President Arroyo, having survived an impeachment move in Congress, has refused to answer questions on poll fraud suggested in the so-called "Hello, Garci" tape, which catches President Arroyo asking the Comelec official about a one-million vote lead while the 2004 vote count was still going on.

"A Garcillano candidacy cuts into the very heart of the festering crisis of the legitimacy, accountability, and credibility of the Arroyo administration... and puts into question the government's commitment to implement electoral reforms," added Representative Nereus Acosta, LP secretary-general.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel had an equally sharp reaction: "He [Garcillano] should not be in the House of Representatives; he should be in Bilibid [Prison] for his role in the wiretapping scandal that suggested he and the President conspired to rig the results of the 2004 presidential elections to ensure her victory."

"Malacañang has created a monster and they have no choice but to support him lest he spill the beans," reacted Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, former president of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

From Malacañang, Executive secretary Eduardo Ermita played it coy.

"I believe we will come to a

beautiful solution," Ermita said.

In an interview with DZXL radio yesterday morning, Secretary Ermita expressed confidence that any dispute on who the administration would back in Bukidnon (Garcillano's home province) would be resolved by the party's internal mechanisms.

Ermita was reacting to reports that even members of the ruling Lakas-CMD party in Bukidnon, particularly the influential Zubiri clan, were aghast at the Palace endorsement of Garcillano.

But Ermita urged all interested parties in Bukidnon to "just wait and see because the elections are still five months away."

"It's premature to talk about that (who will the party endorse) because there are a lot of situations similar to that... I am confident that [party guidelines] will be followed so that we might not have a complicated situation."

Asked if the Palace was really willing to back up Garcillano's congressional bid, Ermita replied: "If he is not disqualified, why not?"

Meanwhile, Garcillano's nephew Michaelangelo Zuce, said he would stand up and challenge his uncle in the coming elections.

Zuce is well-known for his testimony before the Senate saying he was present in President Arroyo's Quezon City home before the 2004 presidential poll, when money was distributed to Comelec officials. (Malacañang denied this ever happened.)

"A battle of tainted characters is always interesting. Let's see what happens," Senator Pimentel told reporters in an interview at his home in Marikina City.

Gil Cabacungan Jr., Michael Lim Ubac, TJ Burgonio, and Gabriel Cardinoza in Northern Luzon

By Christine O. Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac

ALREADY GEARING UP for next May's polls, the Arroyo administration is building a lineup of senatorial candidates that is "winnable and at the same time responsive to the needs of our country," according to presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio.

Claudio said he could not yet disclose the names in the administration's Senate slate. He said majority leaders would make the announcement "when we're ready."

He said an announcement of a partial lineup could be made in January and the timing of the announcement would be done based on the opposition's moves.

According to administration stalwart, Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr., Malacañang just needs one more name to complete its short list of candidates, whose names he did not reveal.

A highly placed source in the ruling Lakas-CMD party revealed, however, that aside from reelectionist Senators Manuel Villar, Ralph Recto and Joker Arroyo, the list of possible administration candidates might include Zambales Gov. Vicente Magsaysay, president of the Governor's

Winning elections in credible way in May on top of GMA agenda in 2007

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

STILL HAUNTED BY THE grievous sin she allegedly committed in 2004, President Macapagal-Arroyo is placing the May elections at the top of her priority list in 2007 with the end-goal of not only winning the polls but winning them in a credible way.

"It is the most important political event in the coming year. Of course it's a priority political activity," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told a Palace briefing yesterday.

"It is important for the administration to win in 2007, but in an election that is regarded as credible, orderly and peaceful," said Gabriel Claudio, the presidential

adviser for political affairs.

Ermita and Claudio said this was what the administration coalition would work on.

"A victory for the administration in credible elections will benefit the country because it will enhance the image and reality of political stability and continuity thereby boosting investors confidence as well as the present momentum for an economic takeoff. Administration victory and HOPE (honest, orderly, and peaceful elections) are wise and reasonable investments the people can make in 2007," Claudio said.

Ermita said he hoped the opposition would not harp on the accusations of administration cheating in the 2004 elections during the campaign.

League; Manila Mayor Lito Atienza; Representatives Pichay, Gilbert Teodoro, Marcelino Libanan and Abraham Kahlil Miltra; Robert Jaworski Sr., a former senator; and presidential chief of staff Mike Defensor.

Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri is being considered for the last slot, but he has yet to make up his mind, according to the Lakas official.

The source said President Macapagal-Arroyo would have the last say on who would be included in the slate since she

would be its campaign manager.

Defensor became the first administration senatorial candidate to get a presidential endorsement when the President herself announced his candidacy during a dinner last Wednesday with Northern Luzon governors and mayors led by Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson. She asked for them to support Defensor, who will resign next week.

Pichay said no Cabinet secretary was aiming to run for the Senate, adding that Claudio would play a

DOUBLE WHAMMY

RP barred by Singapore court from withdrawing FM Swiss deposits

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT suffered a setback in its efforts to recover Marcos-era ill-gotten wealth after Singapore's appellate court effectively barred it from withdrawing the \$25 million remainder of the \$687 million Swiss deposits held in escrow since 2004.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), however, said it would appeal the "patently flawed" decision handed down by the High Court of the city-state (equivalent to the Court of Appeals).

"We will appeal this decision within 30 days," PCGG legal department director Jay Miguel said in an interview.

The remaining \$25 million deposit is being held by the Singapore branch of WestLB AG of Germany which decided in 2003 to withhold the amount in deference to the decision of Hawaii Judge Manuel Real who ruled that human rights victims of the Marcos regime should also benefit from the recovered funds.

WestLB AG had said that due to various claims on the deposits it was not letting go of the money until a court in the city-state rules on how it would be disposed.

The German bank had already returned \$75 million of

the \$100 million entrusted to it by the Philippine National Bank (PNB) which acted as the escrow agent for the recovered Swiss deposits.

The decision found PNB and the Philippine government to have submitted to the jurisdiction of the Singaporean court, stating that when the bank made a

claim for the beneficial interest of the funds, it could have only done so on behalf of the Republic of the Philippines.

"However, despite PNB being its escrow agent, the Republic has not in any way authorized [the bank] to submit to [Singaporean] jurisdiction on its behalf," PCGG said in its statement. "Its acts, therefore, should not in any way bind the Republic," Miguel said.

In effect, the Singaporean court's decision will mean that all claimants-including shell companies allegedly acting as front organizations for the Marcoses-will continue to fight over the remaining funds in which is known legally as interpleader proceedings.

"The recent decision is not a decision on the merits of the WestLB AG case, but a decision on the Republic's application for an order that would stay the interpleader proceedings," Miguel said, explaining that

the Supreme Court's decision declaring the funds to be ill-gotten in nature should be enough basis to end debate as to who actually owns the funds.

On July 15, 2003, the Supreme Court ruled that the \$683 million was ill-gotten and ordered its forfeiture in favor of the government.

But Real dismissed the Supreme Court decision and on Sept. 2, 2003 ruled against the transfer of the \$683 million to the Philippine government and threatened to cite for obstruction of justice anyone who would do so.

Due to Real's injunction, WestLB AG had refused to release to the funds to the Philippine government.

Miguel also refuted the statements of lawyer Rod Domingo Jr., acting on behalf of human rights victims who are claiming the funds. He said that the group's view of the Singaporean court's decision is "as flawed as the decision itself."

"Lest the statements of Atty. Domingo continue to mislead those interested in the case and give them false hopes, the public has to be apprised that the decision did not, in any way, adjudicate the funds in question to any of the parties," he said.

Disini's Swiss deposits can't be touched, says court

THE SANDIGANBAYAN YESTERDAY said the Swiss bank accounts of Marcos crony Herminio Disini were in custodia legis and thus could not be withdrawn even if the Swiss courts lifted the 20-year-old freeze order on the deposits estimated at \$4 million.

The antigrift court said that hearings on Disini's alleged ill-gotten wealth case would continue in January despite a Swiss Federal Supreme Court's warning early this year that it might lift the freeze order unless the Sandiganbayan issues a seizure order on the assets by Dec. 31 this year.

"In any case, the disposition of assets which are involved in this pending action shall be subject to the judgment which the Court shall render in this case and the withdrawal of the said assets during the pendency of this court action is a violation of the prohibition provided by existing law," the court said.

The First Division, chaired by Presiding Justice Teresita Leonardo-De Castro with Associate Justices Diosdado Peralta and Efrén dela Cruz as members, has slated whole-day marathon hearings from Jan. 8 to Jan. 12 in a bid to finally resolve the case which has been languishing in the dockets since 1986. *Norman Bordadora*

DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES

Owwa swamped with calls for help to locate missing hubbies

By Jerome Aning

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, THE Overseas Workers Welfare Administration has noted an increase in the number of Filipino wives seeking government assistance to locate missing husbands in the Middle East.

Owwa's Workers Assistance Unit (WAU), which assists fami-

lies of overseas Filipino workers, said yesterday the complaints about missing husbands rose by as much as 85 percent during the Christmas season.

"Most of the wives are complaining of delayed, irregular or insufficient remittances and we do our best to locate these missing husbands with the help of our Philippine Overseas Labor

Offices," said Gloria Taule, WAU case officer for Riyadh, Jeddah and Kuwait.

Taule said that of the 1,000 or so complaints she handles every month, about half pertain to missing husbands.

"Of course, the usual case is that nothing really bad has happened to the husband. He really does not want to be located for

one reason or another," Taule said in an interview.

"It's usually to mistresses, gambling and other vices that their money has gone to, and to answer you truthfully, we at WAU do not like to interfere because these are purely family matters," she added.

Taule said she was sympathetic to many of the complaining

housewives who have a hard time making both ends meet with the meager remittances sent by their husbands.

"They usually come here when they can no longer contact their husbands, and are wondering what their husbands are doing with their incomes," she said.

The WAU forwards the wives' requests to the overseas labor of-

fices in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait which try to find out where the husbands live or work, and relay their wives' messages of concern.

Ultimately, Taule recounted, they have the unpleasant job of learning the real reasons behind the cases of missing husbands and their infrequent remittances.

Political killings highest since Marcos ouster, say human rights activists

POLITICAL MURDERS IN THE PHILIPPINES reached their highest level in 2006 since the toppling of dictator Ferdinand Marcos more than 20 years ago, human rights activists say.

More than 180 activists—including journalists, human rights workers, left-wing politicians, trade unionists and lawyers—were assassinated this year for their criticism of those in power, they say.

"An average of three extra-judicial killings are occurring every week in the country," a Canadian human rights team concluded recently after a fact-finding mission to the Southeast Asian nation.

"A clear pattern of state-perpetrated politically motivated extrajudicial killings" was occurring in the country, the team said.

Their report has been dismissed by the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo as propaganda to serve the country's communist insurgents who have been fighting a Maoist war for four decades to seize power.

But local human rights group Karapatan says it has recorded 185 such killings in 2006, the highest number since the regime of Marcos, renowned for his brutal suppression of critics and ousted in 1986.

Alarm raised

The sheer number has alarmed the European Union, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Roman Catholic church, all of which have called on Ms Arroyo to take action to stop the bloodshed.

Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, vice-president of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference in this largely Roman Catholic country, said action must be taken irrespective of who was behind them.

"In the past, there were allegations of killings from the left and the right but regardless of which end of the political spectrum is responsible, public authorities should be even-handed in trying to resolve them," he told AFP.

'Murderous year'

Opposition lawmaker Roilo Golez warned the "murderous year" was undermining democracy, in a nation with a history of coups and dictatorships. The most high-profile murder came Dec. 16 when Congressman Luis Bersamin, an ally of Ms Arroyo representing the northern province of Abra, was shot dead along with his security aide outside a church in Quezon City.

Earlier senior government lawyer Nestor Ballacillo was shot dead along with his son also in a Manila suburb. Police said they had arrested a suspect.

In response to the bloodshed, Ms Arroyo has ordered an increase in the visibility of police and for officers to work closer with communities.

She has also set up a special commission to determine who are behind the slayings which

has yet to report its findings.

Blame game

Military and police officials have blamed at least some of the deaths on an internal purge or factional fighting within the 7,100-strong Communist Party's New People's Army.

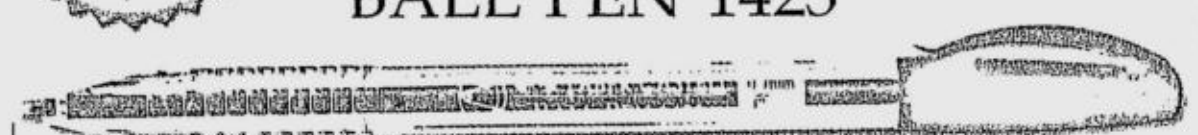
The military, whose officers have also been accused of some of the killings, claim the overall numbers are bloated. For its part, the New People's Army has admitted carrying out purges in the past but have largely denied they are behind the latest spate.

Blaming the communists and establishing a commission have failed to ease fears among many Filipinos about their own safety. **AFP**



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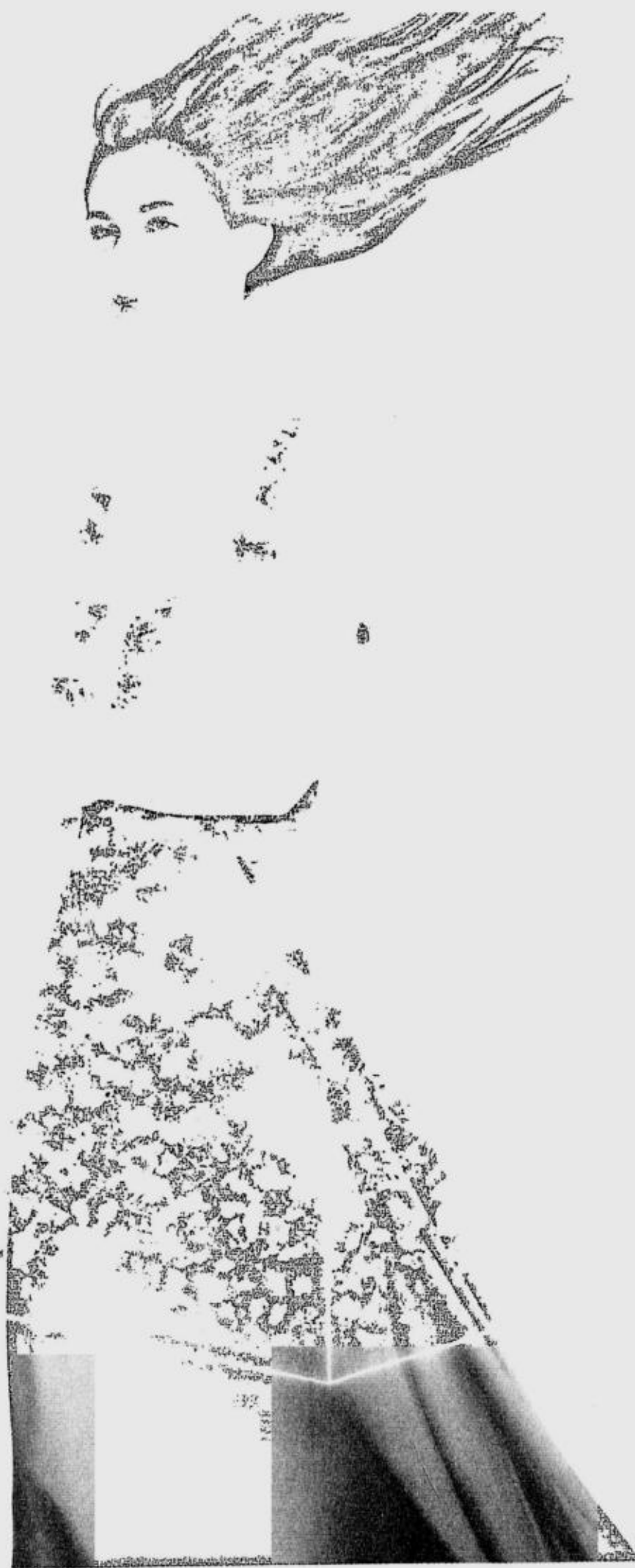
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Rosales takes another swipe at Cha-cha

By Christian V. Esguerra

TAKING ANOTHER SWIPE AT CHARTER change, Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales warned Filipinos in his New Year's message that "new laws may not shape us into what we want."

Calling for unity and sacrifice to lift the nation out of poverty, the 74-year-old Catholic leader said that what the public desired could be "put into life" better than what a new law could do.

Rosales earlier led a massive prayer rally at Manila's central Rizal Park to denounce the Arroyo administration's attempt to hastily overhaul the constitution. What the country needed was "character change," not Charter change, he had said.

In his message for the coming year, Rosales called for unity and sacrifice to pull the country out of its Third World status.

"Nations that had broken the barriers of impoverishment and disunity showed us that the price of unity and progress is discipline and sacrifice," he said.

"National progress is not a matter of debate, competition, or fame-seeking. Without a doubt, the only way to proceed to a common goal (or, better still, a vision) is for absolutely everyone to make a sacrifice of one's individual or group ambition."

Rosales said the new year offered new challenges, opportunities, and a common desire that could be "shared by both the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, the learned and the less educated."

He said such a singular goal would translate to a "better and united community of citizens and believers in any faith."

But the cardinal cautioned against putting the issue of wealth in the equation.

"Communal desiring has basically nothing to do with wealth," he said. "Any concern with wealth immediately divides people. (Communal desire) also has little concern with power, position, and parties. These are equally divisive and, sometimes, violently discordant."



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PCGG hails ruling vs Marcos crony

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION on Good Government has hailed the Sandiganbayan ruling forfeiting the Swiss bank deposits of Fe Roa-Gimenez, a trusted employee of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, calling it a "major victory in the effort to recover ill-gotten wealth."

The PCGG said it would soon ask the Swiss authorities to turn over to the Philippine government the estimated \$8 million in the Zurich-based Adler Bank account of Gimenez, Marcos' social secretary from 1981 and 1986, and her husband, Ignacio Gimenez.

The Sandiganbayan anti-graft court last Thursday ordered the forfeiture of the Gimenez deposits that had been frozen soon after the 1986 Edsa people power revolution, saying they were ill-gotten.

The Gimenez couple are corespon-

dents in a number of ill-gotten wealth cases against the Marcos family, some of which had been filed as long as 20 years ago.

The \$8 million was in danger of being lost as the Swiss Federal Supreme Court early this year threatened to lift the freeze order on the account if the Sandiganbayan failed to hand down a forfeiture order.

PCGG commissioner Nicasio Conti said the Sandiganbayan ruling was immediately transmitted to the government's lawyer in Switzerland, Sergio Salvioni—in time to beat the December 31 deadline set by Swiss authorities.

Conti said the commission was now preparing a petition asking the Swiss court to repatriate the accounts of the spouses Fe and Ignacio Gimenez and Roberto B. Olanday, a half-brother of Ignacio.

The Adler Bank funds were held under the name of GEI Inc., a company registered in Panama.

According to the Sandiganbayan, Ignacio Gimenez had set up Guaranteed Education Inc., a pre-need educational plan company, in July 1985. He owned 96 percent of the firm's stock while Olanday was assigned nominal shares.

Almost a year later, a firm named GEI Inc. was registered in Panama whose directors and officers overlapped with those of Guaranteed Education.

In its complaint against the Gimenezes, the government alleged that the Gimenez couple served as conduits of Marcos and his wife, Imelda, in acquiring properties and acted as dummies of the Marcoses in several corporations, and that Fe Roa-Gimenez had siphoned millions of dollars of government funds into several accounts in foreign countries.

The \$8 million deposit was identified and frozen by Swiss authorities after Marcos' fall.

Extension of Comelec registration unlikely

By Jerome Aning

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS IS UNLIKELY to extend the registration of voters in next year's elections.

"I doubt if there would be an extension," Comelec education and information department chief James Arthur Jimenez said.

Jimenez said the last day of registration and application for transfer of precincts would be tomorrow, Dec. 31.

He said a special registration day could upset the timetable of the Commission's preparations for the election.

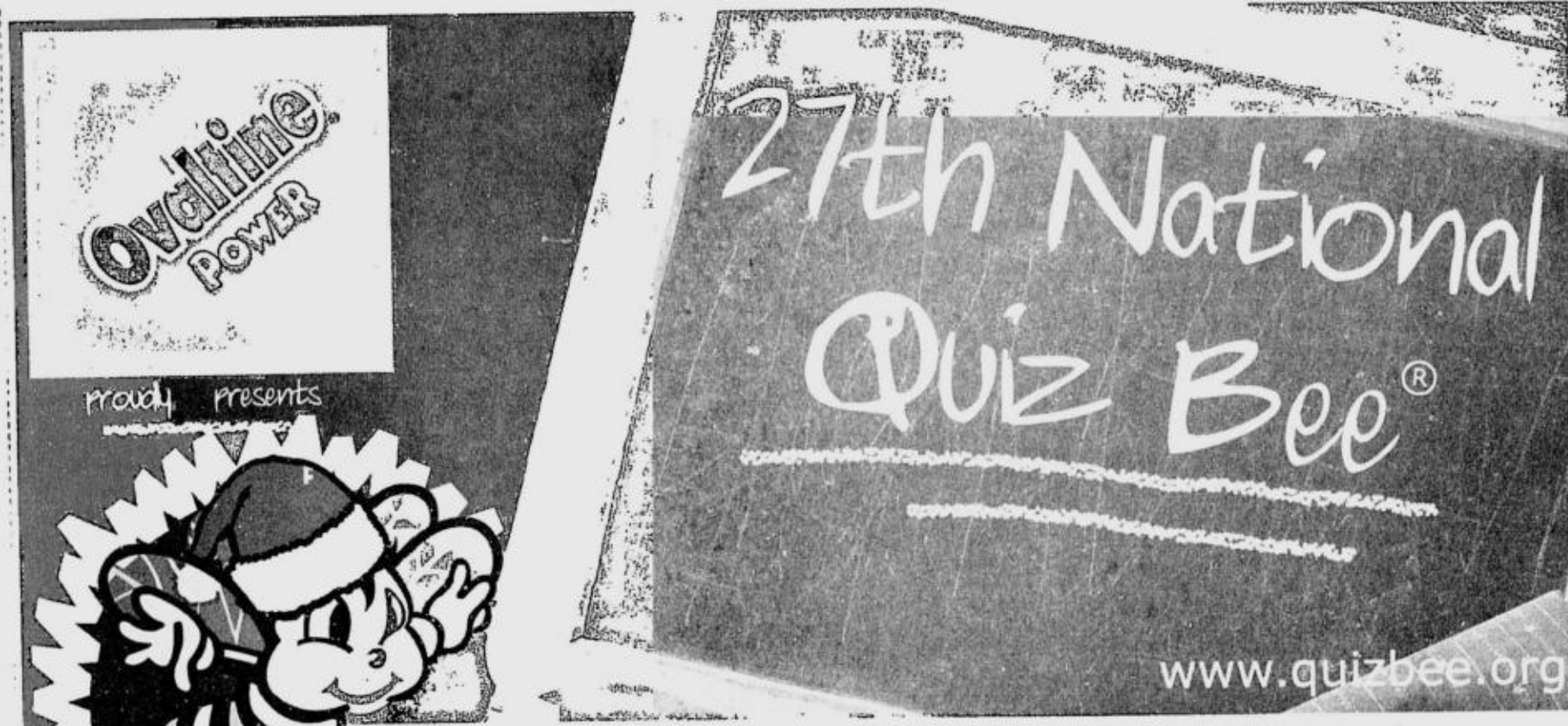
Republic Act No. 8189 or the Voter's Registration Act of 1996 provides that no registration shall be conducted 120 days before a regular election.

The election period starts Jan. 15, 2007. Comelec expects the total number of voters to reach 49 million from 41 million in 2004, according to Commissioner Rene Sarmiento.



YOUNG registrants fill up voter's forms near the Dagupan City office of the Commission on Elections Friday.

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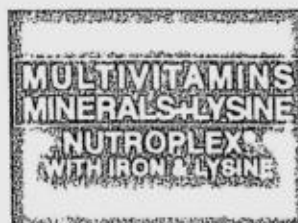
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Correction

In the Dec. 28 issue, a story on page A14—"Abaca silk weavers fight for survival"—misspelled the surname of a female designer. Her name is Jeannie Goulbourn—not Golbourne.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascarido Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL



Saturday, December 30, 2006

6th Day in the Octave of Christmas

1st Reading: 1 Jn 2:12-17

Gospel: Luke 2:36-40

There was also a prophetess named Anna, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. After leaving her father's home, she had been seven years with her husband, and since then she had been continually about the Temple, serving God as a widow night and day in fasting and prayer. She was now 84. Coming up at that time, she gave praise to God and spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

When the parents had fulfilled all that was required by the law of the Lord, they returned to their town, Nazareth in Galilee. There the child grew in stature and strength and was filled with wisdom: The grace of God was upon him.

Commentary

We are God's little ones, young in believing and living as God's beloved children, with and in imitation of Jesus. His name forgives us and we are invited to know God in this Word made flesh. Has this name, this love remained strong in us? Are we intent on the will of God in the world? The prophetess Anna waited decades for the child to come and she rejoices at the sight of him in the temple. She rejoices on behalf of all the people and the deliverance of Jerusalem that this child's very presence announces. And Jesus simply begins to grow in wisdom, age and grace before God. This is our task, our life as well.

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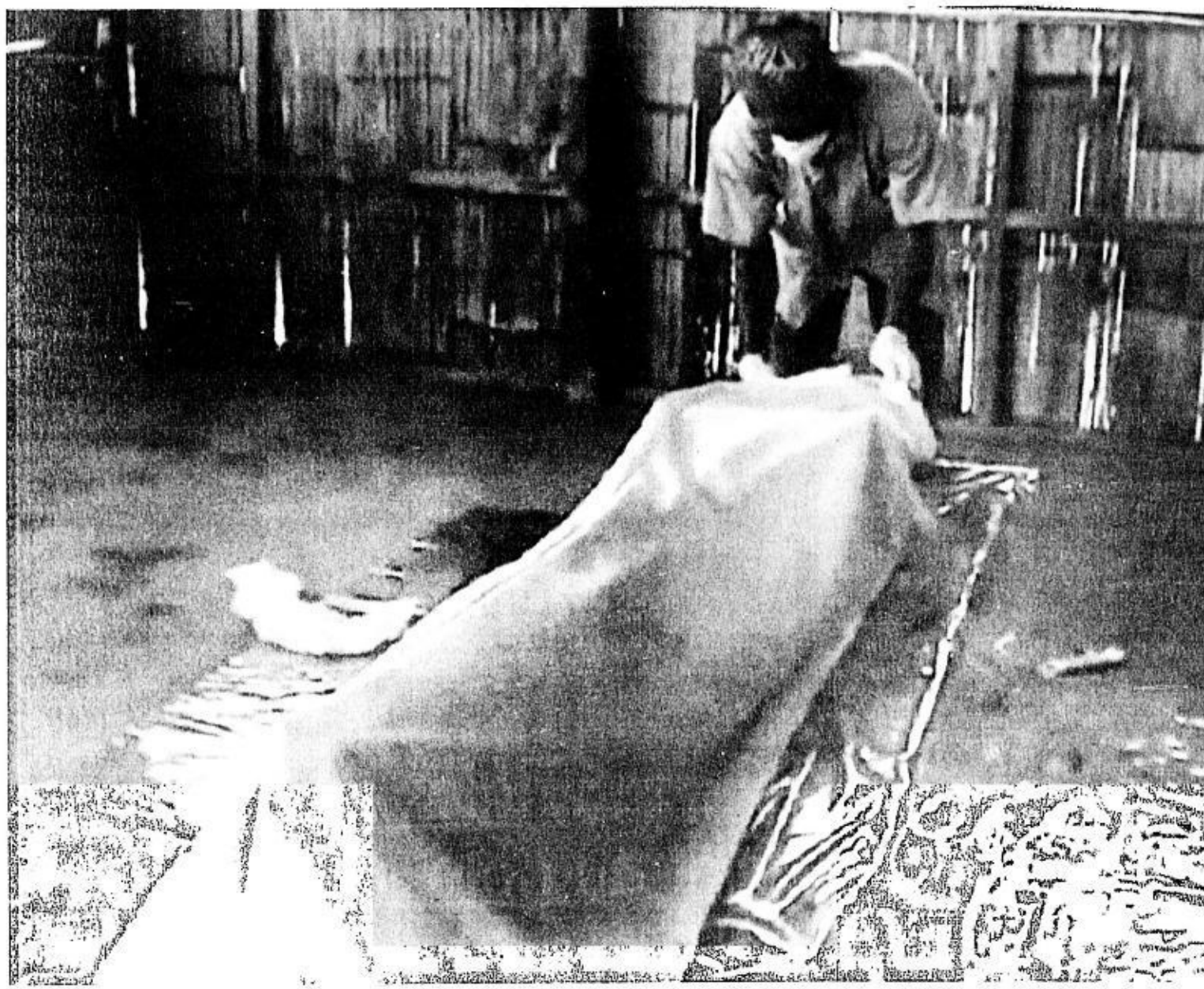
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MUSLIM PRIEST prays over the recovered corpse believed to be that of Janjalani. A Marine official in Jolo said four Abu Sayyaf members who had surrendered to authorities led them to the grave in Patikul, 2 kilometers from the site of a fierce encounter on Sept. 4, 2006.



REMAINS RETURNED: Marines from the 3rd Marine Brigade bring back on Thursday the cadaver believed to be Janjalani to the same burial spot where it had been dug up in the jungles of Patikul in Jolo after Filipino and American forensics took samples for DNA tests.

Janjalani brood gives saliva sample for DNA testing

From page A1

Philippine and US Federal Bureau of Investigation experts are conducting DNA tests to establish if the unidentified remains exhumed in the jungles of Jolo on Wednesday were those of Janjalani.

The parents of Janjalani have dismissed military claims that their son is dead as pure hearsay. Janjalani's brother Hector, serving a 40-year jail term for kidnapping at the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa, had initially refused to give samples that could help identify the remains.

A prison insider told the INQUIRER that Hector changed his mind after two Philippine policemen and American experts came to the prison to persuade him to agree to the tests.

The source said Hector gave a sample of his saliva after authorities kept him for at least four hours at the office of the prison superintendent.

Hector was called to the office at around 2 p.m. and sent back to the maximum security compound after submitting himself to the test, the source said.

The visit of the American experts to the prison was confirmed by a second INQUIRER source.

"He was threatened to be placed

in a *bartolina* (solitary confinement cell) if he refused to give a sample. He also asked for his lawyer or the NBP chaplain before he yielded. But the (prison) officials did not heed his requests," said the source, who is close to Hector.

The source also said that at one point the commander or leader of the Batang City Jail gang in the prison showed up at the room where Hector was being kept and threatened that a BCJ tattoo which Hector has would be "*buburakin*" (erased).

Wearing the tattoo serves as an insurance for a prisoner that he would not be subjected to violence by gangs in prison, according to the source.

Parents don't believe

In Isabela City, Basilan, Janjalani's 77-year-old father, Abubakar, told the INQUIRER that he would only believe claims that Khadaffi was dead if he saw the body.

"Reports about him being killed have become common now so I don't believe in them anymore," Janjalani's mother, Vilma, said in the vernacular.

Reports that Khadaffi was dead spread on Wednesday after his supposed remains were dug up by soldiers in the Jolo jungles.

A military spokesperson yes-

terday said the tests on samples lifted from the remains would take three to four weeks. He said the remains had since been returned to the grave where they were found.

Abubakar and Vilma Janjalani raised six children—three boys and three girls. All the boys eventually ended up on the government's wanted list.

The Janjalani couple agreed to talk to the INQUIRER at their house in barangay Tabuk here on Thursday, a day after news of Khadaffi's death spread.

In the early 1990s, the eldest of the Janjalani children, Abdurajak, founded the Abu Sayyaf Group, which became the most notorious bandit group in the country. He was killed in an encounter with government forces in 1998.

Link to al-Qaida

Khadaffi took over the Abu Sayyaf helm after his brother's death. After Wednesday's macabre discovery, the military has expressed confidence the second son is also now dead.

Hector is also an Abu Sayyaf member.

The military earlier asked the Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory to conduct DNA tests

on tissue samples taken from the exhumed remains, which are supposed to be compared with those of Hector.

Also 'killed' in 2004

Abubakar, a farmer in his younger days and whose clan owns tracts of land in Basilan, said it was not the first time Khadaffi was reported killed.

The elder Janjalani cited an earlier claim by the military that Khadaffi was slain during an encounter in Datu Piang, Maguindanao, in November 2004.

The INQUIRER was with Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza, then the Southern Command chief, when he personally informed the Janjalani couple about their son's alleged death in Maguindanao.

The couple begged the military to locate his body so he could be given proper burial in his hometown.

It was later confirmed that Khadaffi survived the clash unscathed.

"So the recent report was unfounded, too. It's just a rumor," Vilma said.

Abubakar said that the family would know if ever Khadaffi had indeed been killed because his followers would inform them about it. "We have a way of knowing,"

he said, also in the vernacular.

"As of today, we have no reports about him being killed so that's not true," Abubakar said.

Asked when was the last time they saw or talked with Khadaffi, Abubakar said it was about three years ago.

Basilan Bishop Martin Jumoad told the INQUIRER he did not believe the report, either.

"I don't believe it, he died twice already," Jumoad said, adding: "There is no credibility in the military's report."

He said only the result of DNA tests could establish if the exhumed remains were indeed those of Khadaffi.

Abu Sabaya mystery

The military said that based on the claims of its informants, the body was that of Khadaffi. Until the tests had been completed, Jumoad said the military should stop making claims because it would only help to resurrect the mystery that had surrounded the death of Abu Sabaya, another ASG leader.

Sabaya's body was never retrieved after it supposedly fell off a motorboat during a clash with soldiers in Zamboanga Sibugay during military operations to free American hostages Martin and

Gracia Burnham.

"Let's stop it, better produce the body or wait for the DNA test result," Jumoad said.

Basilan provincial administrator Talib Barahim said local officials were happy because if the report of Khadaffi's death was true, "at least one terror leader is down."

"It's a good New Year for everyone, for all of us. We should be happy with the report," Barahim said.

Lantawan Mayor Tahira Ismael said she was certain that a new leader would emerge to replace Khadaffi.

No charisma

She said the idea that Jainal Antel Sali, alias Abu Sulaiman, would be picked as Abu Sayyaf leader was remote.

"Jainal does not have a following or a mass base. He does not possess any charisma," she said.

Basilan Gov. Wahab Akbar expressed concern that the next Abu Sayyaf leader would be more ruthless than Khadaffi.

The military believes former Moro National Liberation Front leader Radullan Sahiron has "most likely" assumed leadership of the Abu Sayyaf since Sulu is his bailiwick.

With a report from Dona Pazzibugan and Inquirer Research

Convicted ex-solon on 'break' from jail

From page A1

ure in a sensational murder case—had been granted a holiday furlough.

He said the former congressman suffered a heart attack on the night of Dec. 24 and had to be rushed to the Makati Medical Center.

The convict's legs were also swollen due to diabetes and his blood pressure had shot up, Vinarao said over the phone.

"It was emergency in nature," he said. "We had to take him out of jail and bring him to another hospital because we do not have the facilities to attend to his needs."

The reportedly sick death convict is under a very tight watch by NBP jailguards, Vinarao added.

But some prison insiders do not buy the story.

Villarosa was one of seven people—the others have become known in the media as the "Mamburao Six" farmers—who were meted out the death penalty on March 1 by a Quezon City lower court for murdering the two sons of Villarosa's political rival, former Rep. Ricardo Quintos, over land and politics in Occidental Mindoro.

The killings occurred on Dec. 13, 1997.

'All for show'

Seven months ago, Villarosa was also allowed out of prison for medical reasons, except that he experienced low blood pressure at that time.

Vinarao had called that incident a "matter of life and death."

But an NBP insider yesterday doubted that Villarosa was again sick, saying he saw the former lawmaker before Christmas Eve and that he did not look ill.

"It's all for show," the insider said.

Another source said Villarosa looked

healthy last Sunday and was even doing his daily errands in the livelihood center he had built near his cell.

Prison rumors

Some insiders also saw Villarosa walk out of the main gate of the maximum security compound on Dec. 24, the highly reliable added.

Rumors that Villarosa had been transferred to the custody of his wife, Rep. Amelita Villarosa, also started to spread inside the compound when personnel from NBP's Records and Identification Section supposedly came to his cell to get his fingerprints, said the source.

"Usually, when they get your fingerprints, that means you are free," the source said.

But Vinarao denied the rumors.

But one thing seems certain: Villarosa may welcome 2007 inside room 902 of the Makati Medical Center.

New Year in hospital

A check at the MMC shows Villarosa has been at the hospital since Christmas eve.

The INQUIRER tried to get more details about Villarosa's heart condition but the medical staff at MMC's ninth floor, citing hospital policy, said they could not give any information to the media. The ninth floor is the hospital's most expensive floor.

The door to his room, however, gave a hint of just how much medical attention the VIP has been getting: Posted on it were the names of four doctors.

Three guards were also seen outside his room. A source at the hospital said Villarosa had round-the-clock security.

Double murder

The source said Villarosa was conscious after the "mild" heart attack and had been

on diet while his blood pressure was being monitored.

In the 1997 murders, Quintos's two sons, Michael and Paul, were attending a friend's birthday celebration in Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro when masked gunmen shot them.

The case dragged on for years, going all the way up to the Supreme Court.

Former Rep. Quintos accused Villarosa of masterminding the killings, claiming the murders were politically motivated.

Villarosa denied this, saying Quintos was not a threat to his political career, and theorized the murders could have stemmed from a land dispute involving the Quintoses and displaced farmers of the 600-hectare Golden Country Farms, which one of the sons managed.

Communist claims

Later that year, the INQUIRER received an unsigned fax message from someone claiming to be a member of the New People's Army, who said Michael was killed because of alleged injustices committed against GC-Fl peasants.

The claims were supported by Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, who said the murders were part of revolutionary justice for the farmers.

Villarosa enjoyed a victory in the political arena when he defeated Quintos in the 2001 gubernatorial race.

But the wheels of justice eventually swung for Quintos.

On March 1 this year, a trial judge sentenced Villarosa and the "Mamburao 6" to death, later commuted to life imprisonment after Congress abolished capital punishment. With a report from Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

SMITH RELEASED

From page A1

"Whoever did this should be answerable to the court. This is a clear rape of the Constitution," a "shocked" Evalyn Ursua, private counsel of the rape complainant "Nicole," told ABS-CBN's late-night newscast Bandila

Not without GMA nod

"It cannot happen without the blessing of the President," she said, adding that President Macapagal-Arroyo could be impeached for allowing this "violation of our sovereignty" and "clear foreign intervention."

Ursua said only the courts could give orders for Smith to be transferred.

Asked what was the basis for Smith's release despite his conviction, Lussenhop simply said: "By the order of the Philippine government."

He repeated that answer when asked why Smith was freed despite the unresolved petition by the American soldier's lawyers at the Court of Appeals challenging Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Benjamin Pozon's order committing him to the Makati jail.

Back at US Embassy

Smith would be kept in the same US Embassy facility where he was held during his trial, said Lussenhop.

An intelligence source said Smith was freed on orders of Ms. Arroyo but there was no immediate comment from Malacañang.

INQUIRER sources in Baguio where Ms. Arroyo is spending the New Year said that she was at with US Embassy officials for cocktails for about an hour last night.

"What I know is *nakalabas na siya* (He has been released). It's government to government," a source familiar with the case told the INQUIRER apparently to justify the turnover of Smith to US custody.

The United States has repeatedly demanded custody of Smith, saying Pozon's order to keep him in a Philippine jail violated the VFA which the embassy said allows the US to keep Smith in its custody pending completion of all judicial processes.

Four-vehicle convoy

A four-vehicle convoy carrying Americans was seen moving out of the jail compound at around 11:30 p.m., Tony Aguila, a food vendor at the scene told INQUIRER photographer Boy Cabrido.

Pozon earlier this month convicted Smith of raping the woman "Nicole" in a van cruising at Subic Bay Freeport in November last year.

Smith was convicted on Dec. 4. Pozon acquitted his three other co-accused US Marines, who have since left the country.

The United States abruptly cancelled its annual military exercises with the Philippines to indicate its displeasure over Pozon's and the CA's refusal to hand the American over to US custody.

With reports from Tarra V. Quismundo and Norman Bordadora

Police eye Abu hand in mall blast

By Jim Gomez
Associated Press Writer

AL-QAIDA-LINKED ABU SAYYAF REBELS may have planted a bomb that injured three people in a shopping mall in Sultan Kudarat province as part of an extortion attempt, a police official said yesterday.

A soda can packed with black powder and attached to a wrist watch exploded at a baggage counter in Kim San Plaza in Tacurong City on Thursday, slightly injuring two shoppers and an employee, police said.

Investigators suspected Abu Sayyaf militants after being told by the mall's management that it received a letter purportedly signed by Abu Sulaiman, one of the group's leaders, demanding P50,000, said police Chief Supt. German Doria.

Extortion gangs may have also used the name of Sulaiman, who has gained notoriety for deadly bomb attacks, to scare the management into giving in to their demands, he said.

The mall refused to give in to the extortion demand, which was made two weeks ago, despite the threat of an unspecified attack, Doria said.

Another shopping mall in Tacurong received a similar extortion letter a few weeks earlier and immediately reported it to police who provided extra security, he said. That mall also did not pay the demand.

Doria said that the suspected bomber, a woman, apparently bought the soda, firecracker powder, batteries and wires in the mall and assembled the bomb in a restroom, where she was seen by a janitor tinkering with an object. The woman left a bag at the baggage counter, where the blast occurred minutes later, he said.

"The attacker definitely has some training in bomb-making," Doria told The Associated Press. "She knew security was tight at the gates but the mall had everything she needed to assemble a small explosive."

Doria said he ordered security to be tightened in all malls and public areas in the province to thwart any bomb plots by al-Qaida-linked militants and other armed groups.

The Abu Sayyaf is a small but violent group that has declared its desire to establish a separate Islamic enclave in the south, home to minority Muslim Filipinos. The government, however, has dismissed the rebels as bandits surviving off ransom kidnappings and extortion.

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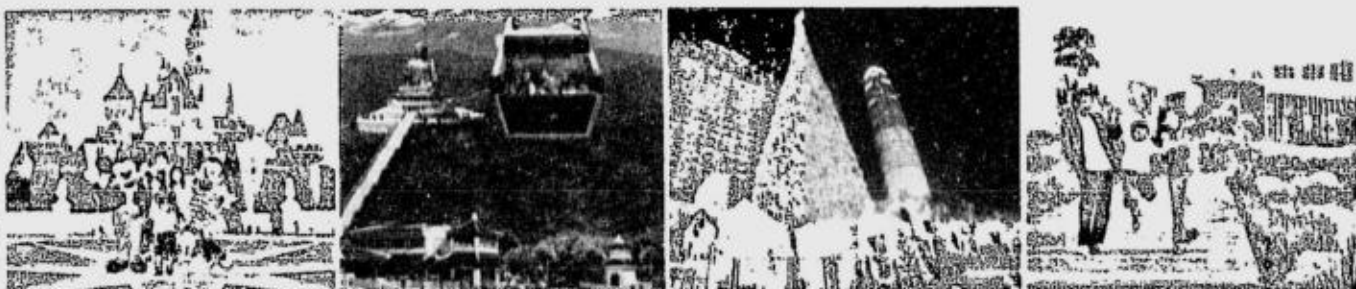
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Stroll and shop along the Harbour City in Tsim Sha Tsui and Times Square in Causeway Bay for an uptown shopping experience. Times Square's ninth floor offers a vast selection of items the children will surely love.

More adventurous shoppers could visit the Mong Kok area where they could find great items at affordable prices. The Temple Street Night Market's diverse and themed streets are great for families with tons of shopping ahead of them!

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Hong Kong is indeed Asia's Culinary Capital! With the vast array of dining choices, one can never go wrong. At every stop, finding healthy and delicious food that appeal to both the young and young at heart are just a heartbeat away! There's an immense array of dishes that everyone in the family will love: traditional Hong Kong cuisines, non-stop buffets, well-loved desserts! Add that to an endless selection of dishes from around the world!

Taste the local culture by trying a traditional Hong Kong delicacy, be it the fun dim sum of the famed egg tarts, savor the rich Hong Kong culture at every bite! Restaurants with interesting

menus and fun entertainment for the young can be found in every corner. Indeed, dining in Hong Kong will leave anyone breathless!

ENDLESS FUN

Hong Kong is truly a children's paradise with bundles of fun and boundless energy. The whole family can enjoy a trip to Hong Kong Disneyland to experience first hand the magic of Mickey and friends. Revel in the enchanting Disney atmosphere and rekindle childhood dreams in Fantasyland, Adventureland, Tomorrowland and Main Street U.S.A. There is never a dull moment when everyone can enjoy the dazzling performances, fireworks displays and exciting parades!

Troop down to Ocean Park for another exciting time at one of Southeast Asia's largest aquariums. Marvel at the majesty of the great seas and enjoy the fascinating performances of the friendly dolphins and sea lions at the Ocean Theater. Heighten family bonding and fun with the Park's thrilling rides and the famous cable car ride.

AMAZING SIGHTS

As Asia's World City, Hong Kong offers a plethora of amazing sights that leave one breathless. The new Ngong Ping 360 cable car ride provides a 25-minute picturesque view of the countryside and the vast glittering ocean. From afar, the Ngong Ping Village, Giant Buddha and Po Lin Monastery can be enjoyed in a scenic view from the cable car ride.

Take the family on a ride in the famous Peak Tram and marvel at the mesmerizing view of Hong Kong. The newly-renovated Peak Tower now offers boundless establishments that will

leave you coming back for more. Head to the famous home of the famous, Madame Tussauds Wax Museum and have an amazing time face to face with the world's most recognized faces.

Cap your day with a visit to Avenue of Stars at Tsim Sha Tsui and watch A Symphony of Lights, a daily multimedia show which involves 33 key buildings on both sides of Victoria Harbor. The display of laser beams and colored lights, set to music and narration, is guaranteed to dazzle everyone in the family!

NATURAL WONDERS

Hong Kong is more than a bustling cosmopolitan city and shopping mecca. Get to know a quite side of Hong Kong with a visit to the Hong Kong Wetland Park, one of the latest attractions offering quality edutainment. Head to this amazing sanctuary to learn more about the environment and how to take care of it.

A definite must-try is a visit to the outlying islands including Lamma Island. Ride the ferry together and enjoy the scenic eco-wonders that only Hong Kong can offer. Try out the local seafood cuisine for the ultimate gastronomic indulgence.

Winter Festivities

Christmas is definitely the holiday for families. In Hong Kong, there is no other place with much winter cheer than Santa's Town! Take an enchanting journey in Central wherein the city center is transformed into a winter wonderland decked with Santa's colorful lodge and the

Dazzling Christmas Tree which rises 35 meters above the Statue Square. Children can post season wishes at Santa's Post Office and pose for photos in front of famous icons from Hong Kong's favorite theme parks and museums, Ocean Park, Hong Kong Disneyland, Madame Tussauds Wax Museum and Ngong Ping 360.

All over town, shops will be spreading good tidings with winter sales and special offers. Restaurants will also offer special deals and seasonal delights. Round off your festive exploration in Hong Kong by taking your family to the Mistletoe Corner for hugs and kisses to celebrate the season of giving.

With the vast array of amazing offerings and boundless activities, there is no better time to go to Hong Kong for a fun-filled family vacation. For more information on Hong Kong, visit DiscoverHongKong.com.



4D3N Family Fun in Hong Kong

DAY ONE

Morning
The Peak: Ride the Peak Tram, marvel at the panoramic view at the Peak Tower Viewing Terrace, and meet the stars at Madame Tussauds Wax Museum.

Afternoon
Dim sum lunch. Family shopping at Causeway Bay.

Evening
Head to the Avenue of Stars for an alfresco dinner and enjoy the dazzling "A Symphony of Lights" multimedia show.

DAY TWO
Spend a magical day at Hong Kong Disneyland. Experience a local Chinese-style cafe.

DAY THREE

Morning
Go on an eco-adventure at Hong Kong Wetland Park.

Afternoon
Embark on the Ngong Ping 360's journey of enlightenment with a 25-minute cable car ride from Tung Chung to Ngong Ping in Lantau Island.

Evening
Enjoy shopping at street market in Mong Kok and sample local desserts.

DAY FOUR
Spend a fun-filled day at Ocean Park. Do some last-minute shopping before departure.



Stocks near 10-year high

From page A1

Average daily volume slipped to 2.88 billion shares worth P2.28 billion from 3.68 billion shares worth P3.08 billion in the previous week.

Strong performing stocks

Fund managers said that in the past few days, the market had seen some window-dressing—the sale of weak performing stocks by money managers just before the end of a reporting period.

This selling activity is usually accompanied by buying activity of strong performing stocks, analysts said.

"The uptrend will still persist next week. The market might gain some ground," said Spencer Yap of BPI Securities Inc.

"Profit taking is possible next week but it probably won't happen," he said, adding investors may wait till late-January or early February, to see how corporate figures are performing, before deciding whether to sell.

Yap said "the general uptrend should still

continue next year," as the economy is expected to remain rosy.

Ten-to 20-percent rise in 2007

He forecast a 10- to 20-percent rise in the market in 2007.

Garcia said investors were encouraged by the decline in the fiscal deficit, which has sustained a low interest rate.

"This creates an environment conducive for companies to grow and to increase their sales and expand their [profit] margins. We expect a 20-percent growth in corporate earnings and the market to be on track with that earnings growth to hit 3,500 next year," Garcia said.

Interest rates to further decline

Allan Yu, vice president of Metrobank Trust Banking Group, said he expected interest rates to decline in 2007, which will further improve the fiscal deficit and allow government to borrow less for its funding requirements.

Lower interest rates are also supported by lower inflation, which is further sustained by

lower crude oil prices, according to Yu.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas sees consumer prices rising by 4.2-4.8 percent year-on-year this month, compared with the 4.7-percent gain in November, reflecting a firmer peso (See peso story on B1) and steady fuel prices.

Only major concern

The only major concern in 2007 is the congressional and local elections, which may cause investors to become more cautious while they await the outcome but even the elections are not expected to lead to a prolonged downturn.

"The only possible blip (on the screen) are the elections in May. People might take a breather. There might be some caution just before the elections," Yap of BPI Securities said.

"Next year, we are still bullish about the market," said Gomer Tan of Regina Capital Development Corp., citing an expected rise in spending for the May elections and the country's improved economy. *With a report from AFP*

National hero a prisoner of myths

From page A1

Rizal was the infamous Jack the Ripper, an unidentified murderer who killed and mutilated at least six prostitutes in the Whitechapel district in the East End of London in late 1888.

Bayani and hero are words that have been used so much, and indiscriminately at times, that they have lost the power to inspire a people that sorely needs heroes. There are many people with great hearts, looks, minds and deeds in this world, but the true hero is one who has passed on from the extraordinary to myth.

In September 1896, three months to the day he was executed in Bagumbayan, Rizal scribbled an entry in his journal reacting to "fanciful stories about me." In his lifetime he was rumored to be, among many things, a German spy and a miracle worker.

He could not have known how myths and legends would continue to spin after his death making one of his journal entries prophetic. He wrote: "I'm going to become a legendary personage. Friends and enemies invent fabulous stories which elevate me and improbable stories to harm me and they find people who are considered educated to believe them."

Hitler or Charlie Chaplin?

That Rizal fathered Hitler is the easiest to debunk and its documentary source easily traced. The argument is that Rizal had a German connection. He studied at Heidelberg University and, being quite the Pinoy Don Juan, he probably sired a son—why not a daughter?—who later turned out to be Adolf Hitler. Well, Hitler was born in 1889, but Rizal left Germany for good in 1887. Unless Hitler was a delayed baby, that is highly improbable.

Although there is no resemblance between the two, it is argued that unlike the tall, blond and blue-eyed Germans that Hitler wanted to propagate into the "master race," Hitler himself was small of stature and had dark



ARCHIVAL MATERIAL? Making the rounds of email and blogs is Pacman's head superimposed on some heroic body.

hair and dark eyes, similar to the many statues of Rizal that dot the archipelago. These monuments to Rizal actually look more like Charlie Chaplin.

Contrary to popular belief, Hitler was Austrian and not a German, so where is the Rizal connection there? Rizal visited Austria in May 1887 and, according to his traveling companion Max Viola, Rizal spent a night with an Austrian woman whose name eludes history.

In his memoirs Viola wrote that they were billeted at the Hotel Metropole in Vienna where Rizal, "encountered the figure of a temptress in the form of a Viennese woman, of the family of the Camellias or Margarite, of extraordinary beauty and irresistible attraction, who seemingly had been expressly invited to offer for a moment the cup of mundane pleasure to the apostle of Philippine freedom who until then had enjoyed among his intimates the fame worthy of his glorious namesake, St. Joseph. With the exception of this case I knew of no other slip of Rizal during more than six months of our living together."

It's amazing what yarns can be pulled from an alleged one-night

stand with a Viennese prostitute.

Jack the Ripper

The Jack the Ripper legend is more recent but more complicated. Textbook history states that Rizal was in London from May 1888 to January 1889, spending time in the British Museum Library copying Antonio de Morga's "Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas (1609)" by hand because there were no photocopying machines at the time. Jack the Ripper was active around this time and, since we do not know what Rizal did at night or on the days he was not in the library, Rizal is now suspect.

The argument is that when Rizal left London, the Ripper murders stopped. They say that Jack the Ripper must have had some medical training, based on the way his victims were mutilated. Rizal, of course, was a doctor. Jack the Ripper liked women, and so did our own Rizal. And—this is so obvious that many overlooked it—Jose Rizal's initials, JR, perfectly match those of Jack the Ripper!

For someone who wrote a great deal on the most ordinary things, Rizal only made passing reference to Jack the Ripper in an essay on the Guardia Civil he wrote in the April 30, 1890 issue of *La Solidaridad*. Can this be added to the flimsy but growing list of circumstantial evidence to suspect Rizal?

Rizal's name appears on the long list of suspects in the Jack the Ripper website. There is even a forum dedicated to Rizal, begun by a certain "Amateursleuth" who posts allegedly from Canada and signs these simply "Karen." Her first posting lists the following data:

"In 1888, [Rizal] was staying with the Beckett family at 37 Chalcot Crescent in Camden [London]; he was a doctor (ophthalmologist); he was good with weapons (was called 'the swordsman'); he was a Malay; he was proficient in the martial arts; he would have been 27 at the time of the Ripper killings; he was short, had dark skin, dark hair and dark eyes; he came from a well-to-do

family, was well-dressed and looked respectable; he came to London on May 24, 1888 on the ship City of Rome; he left London in January of 1889, and the Ripper killings stopped; he was multi-talented (could speak many languages, was a writer, poet, author, sculptor, artist); he was executed in the Philippines on Dec. 30, 1896 at the age of 35; had a romantic relationship with Gertrude Beckett, the daughter of Charles Beckett; he wrote letters to his friend Blumentritt from London, however there were no letters written to his family or friends from July 1888 to Nov. 14, 1888; after he died, his mother tried to procure his assets which consisted of some pretty nice jewelry, including gold cuff links and other baubles of diamonds and amethysts (gold chain with a red stone seal?); I think this man warrants further investigation, which I intend to do."

Foreign suspects

A photo of Rizal was then uploaded from an Argentine website, leading a certain Glenn Andersson, writer and historian, to remark:

"An interesting character; good luck with the research and come back with more when you can. With such South American features, I doubt that he fits in well with the possible sightings, but then on the other hand, we can't be sure that any of those witnesses saw the Ripper anyway. After all, foreign suspects from those parts were under investigation by the police at the time."

Then somebody remarked that Rizal was in Paris at a time that one of the victims, Annie Chapman, was cut up leading "Karen" to reply: "OK, maybe he didn't kill Annie Chapman, but he had a friend called Dr. Antonio Regidor who could have killed her. Rizal stayed with him in London prior to moving in with the Becketts. Dr. Regidor was also from Manila. They were quite close."

It was also noted that one of the Ripper victims was buried in the same cemetery where Regidor and his family now lie in

IMF welcomes RP exit from decades of debt

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY fund yesterday welcomed the announcement of the Philippines that it would repay its remaining IMF obligations, paving the way for the country's exit from more than 40 years under the lender's tutelage.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said Thursday the final repayment of the remaining \$220 million in outstanding obligations would be made this week, a year and five months ahead of schedule.

"The Philippines' ability to repay the fund early reflects a stronger balance-of-payments position, achieved through impressive fiscal reforms that have substantially reduced the fiscal deficit and debt," IMF Acting Managing Director Takatoshi Kato said in a statement.

He said the IMF and Philippine authorities would continue to maintain a close relationship as they tackle remaining problems facing the country.

"We are encouraged by the Philippine authorities' resolve to address remaining policy challenges, including the need to reduce the public debt further," he said.

Twenty-three times

The Philippines borrowed 23 times from the IMF starting in 1962 when the government of the late President Diosdado Macapagal, father of President Macapagal-Arroyo, had problems with the country's balance of payments.

The first loan totaled \$40.4 million and the next administration of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos borrowed every year until it was thrown out by People Power in 1986.

Borrowings continued through successive administrations as the country struggled to keep afloat amid economic crises in the 1990s.

Seal of approval

The Philippines has been entitled to exit the IMF post-program monitoring since October 2000, when its outstanding obligations fell below the amount it contributes to the IMF, but it chose to continue

with the arrangement anyway. A seal of approval from the IMF is important to the Philippines, as international credit agencies still place the country's sovereign debt at non-investment grade.

With new revenue measures in place and more restrained spending, the Philippines expects to attain a balanced budget by as early as 2008, senior government officials have said.

Behind bright prospects

Bright economic prospects have contributed to Filipinos being hopeful of the New Year, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

He was reacting to the results of a Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey that showed that most adult Filipinos were entering the New Year with hope.

"We all know that the economic indicators are good despite destabilization moves some months ago—the economy is doing well," Ermita said in Filipino, in an interview with dzXL radio.

"The showing of the peso against the dollar is good, and so are the overseas remittances and the collection of taxes. Interest rates and the inflation rate are down," he said.

Ermita attributed the economic turnaround to the leadership of Ms Arroyo.

Hope springs eternal

"It's a good thing that through the media the people could feel that we have a good future, especially now that the New Year is here," he said. "As they say, hope springs eternal."

Ermita urged the people to continue to have faith and confidence in the leadership.

The SWS survey found that 90 percent of Filipinos who experienced hunger once or a few times over the past three months were entering the New Year with hope.

Among Filipinos whose families did not go hungry in the past three months, 91 percent said they were hopeful for the New Year. *Reports from AP, AFP and Christine O. Avendaño*

Rizal joins ranks of Dickens, Austen

From page A1

utive director of the National Book Foundation and the National Book Awards.

Filipino-American writer Jessica Hagedorn, author of the critically acclaimed and best-selling novel, "Dogeaters," has said that Augenbraum's "Noli" was a "beautiful new translation."

Elda Rotor, Penguin Books Classics' executive editor, said the publication "represents Penguin's commitment to publish the major literary classics of the world."

Rotor, a Filipino-American, said she was not the original acquisitions editor for the book, but "for me, it's a particular joy on many levels, to place Rizal on the same shelf as Dickens and Austen, to share a classic that is read, studied and celebrated in parts of the world, yet unfamiliar to a wider audience."

In Manila, the book is available at Powerbooks and Fully Booked.

Scathing portrayal

First published in Berlin in 1887, "Noli Me Tangere" tells the story of Crisostomo Ibarra, who returns from his European studies to find his old town in the grip of social iniquity and decay. His efforts to introduce enlightenment and modernism are defeated at

every turn by the Spanish colonial establishment as represented by abusive civil and military officials and obscurantist friars.

Because of its scathing portrayal of Spanish colonial depredations, the book was banned in the Philippines, but copies of it were smuggled into the country for clandestine reading by educated Filipinos.

As a result, the "Noli," along with its dark sequel, "El Filibusterismo," which tells of the return of Ibarra as an avenging angel *a la* "The Count of Monte Cristo," became the bible of the Philippine revolution against Spain in 1896.

Although Rizal denied any involvement in the revolution, his name became the password of the Filipino revolutionaries, and he was executed by the Spanish authorities on Dec. 30, 1896.

Fascinated

Augenbraum said he stumbled upon Rizal's novel in 1992 while compiling a bibliography of North American Latino fiction writers. He said he came across the name of National Artist N.V.M. Gonzalez whom he thought to be Latino. He went on to read Gonzalez and "loved it" and thereby got "introduced to a whole world of Filipino and Filipino-American literature, which I began to seek out here in

the US."

"The name of Rizal came up several times, so I read the 'Noli,' which fascinated me," he said. "Then I read the 'Fili,' which also fascinated me. Then I read the Austin Coates biography, and Rizal himself became one of my heroes."

Augenbraum said he tried to get university presses interested in republishing the novels in the English translation by either Charles Derbyshire or Leon Ma. Guerrero, but none was interested. (The University of Hawaii Press has published the Soledad Lacson-Locsin translations of both books.)

In 2002, after editing and revising a Penguin book, Augenbraum was asked by Penguin editors if he could recommend a new addition to the Penguin Classics line, and he suggested the "Noli."

Very excited

"[They] knew very little [of the 'Noli'], but when they began to investigate, they became very excited," he said.

"This would be the first Filipino writer in the venerable classics tradition, and the Filipino-American community had been growing," he said.

Penguin at first thought of adapting one of the existing En-

glish translations, but "concluded that it needed a new translation for the American eye and ear," Augenbraum said.

Augenbraum said he enjoyed translating Rizal. "The 'Noli's' Spanish was not particularly difficult to translate. Rizal wrote a clear, lucid Castilian without much slang and without overusing idioms," he said.

"I would like to add that the pleasure of translating [and reading] the 'Noli' is that the non-central characters are extraordinarily rich," he said.

Augenbraum said he found it more difficult to be editor than translator.

Bridging cultural divide

"The harder part was to compile the notes that would explain the many, many religious and cultural references Rizal used... The US is not steeped in the Catholic faith and many Americans will probably be reading about the Philippines for the first time," he said.

Apparently, Augenbraum succeeded in trying to bridge the cultural and historical divide between the "Noli's" 19th century Philippines setting and American readers in the 21st century.

According to Hagedorn, Augenbraum's introductory essay,

"is smart and sensitively written, providing great background for Rizal's rich, moving novel."

Augenbraum said he liked the Derbyshire and Guerrero translations, but there should be new translations of Rizal's work.

"Most translators will tell you that each generation should have its own translation of classic works. Language changes over time, political ideals change over time, information emerges over time, new critical thinking emerges. I hope that this translation will be the translation for our time," he said.

Required reading

Augenbraum said the "Noli" should be required reading in Asian-American courses in US universities "because it is the foundational novel of the nation, with large implications for the diaspora and its influence on other writers."

According to Rotor, Penguin has learned that the novel has generated interest among professors across the US who would like to make the novel a part of their curriculum.

The new English translation of the "Noli" comes at a time when Filipino critics and historians are starting to complain that there was too much lionizing and even deification of Rizal so that honest

critical assessments of his work and legacy have become nearly impossible.

Florentino Hornedo, Unesco commissioner and a literature and history professor at the University of Santo Tomas, said rendering Rizal and his works as a "dogma" was "not good" since the novels were a "fiction" and a creative embellishment, with some exaggerations conditioned by Rizal's masonic and liberal leanings.

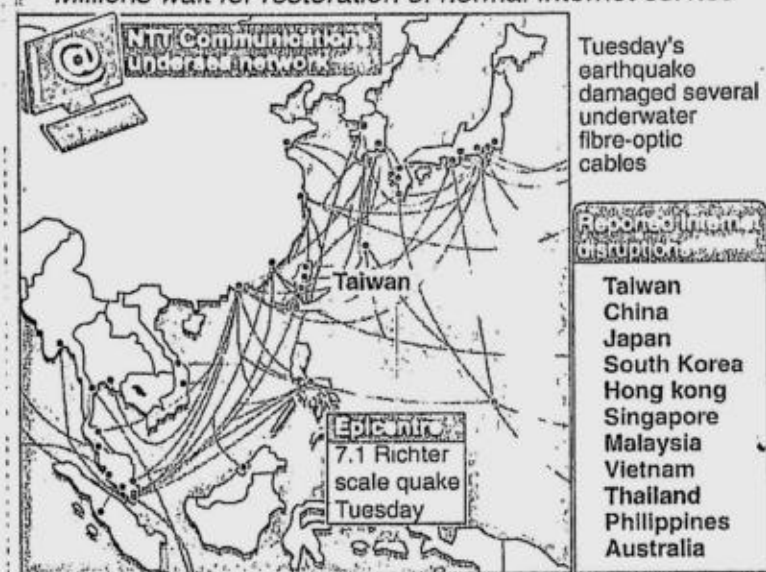
Augenbraum agreed. "The 'Noli' is fiction obviously, but [that's] an interesting point about how historical fiction becomes perceived as history," he said.

"In my introduction to the 'Noli,' I discuss Rizal becoming a sort of 'santo' in the Filipino diaspora, no longer a real personage, and I question whether he ever really was a real person, since he saw himself as part of Philippine narrative history and acted accordingly. Although some people have compared Rizal to Jose Marti [the 19th-century Cuban writer and patriot], Marti has never attained the supernatural status of Rizal," said Augenbraum.

"[Rizal] is a prisoner of his own legend... Whoever he was in life has become irrelevant. He's probably closer to Joan of Arc or St. George than he is to Jose Marti," he said.

Tangled communications

Millions wait for restoration of normal Internet service



Source: NTTCom/AFP

281206 AFP

Internet slowly comes back online in Asia

HONG KONG—Millions of frustrated Internet users across Asia slowly regained access to overseas websites on Friday, three days after an earthquake off the coast of Taiwan snapped several vital undersea cables.

Telecoms operators across the region rerouted Internet links to circumvent the ruptured lines off the southern part of the island, as engineers donned diving suits to assess the damage and begin repairs.

"Everything is improving now," said a spokesman for PCCW, Hong Kong's largest fixed-line operator.

"All international call and roaming services have gone back to normal, including to Taiwan, although some websites are still congested," he said.

Authorities in the southern Chinese territory said five maintenance ships had been dispatched to repair six fiber-optic cables, which handle about 90 percent of telecommunications capacity in the area.

The government said repairs could take up to a week.

Taiwan's largest phone company, Chunghwa Telecom, has commissioned three more ships to assist the repair effort. The cables ruptured following Tuesday's 7.1-magnitude earthquake, which killed two people on the island.

Internet users frustrated by their inability to log onto e-mail accounts, news websites and online banking services—conveniences that have become part of modern life—found access across the region Friday improved but still patchy.

Southeast Asia's largest telecom operator Singapore Telecommunications said it has established a "command center" to restore affected Internet, BlackBerry and private data network services as quickly as possible.

The SingTel Group has interests in about 50 submarine cables with landing points in more than 50 locations in Asia, the company says.

Most Internet and telephone services had been restored across South Korea on Friday, although 49 exclusive business lines—41 run by Korean Telecom (KT) and eight by LG Dacom—remained out of order.

By Riza T. Olchondra

TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES may suffer millions of pesos in foregone international voice and SMS revenue due to quake-damaged cable systems off Taiwan, an official of a telecom firm said yesterday.

The earthquake on Tuesday has cut Philippine telecom capacity by as much as 40 percent, according to the National Telecommunications Commission.

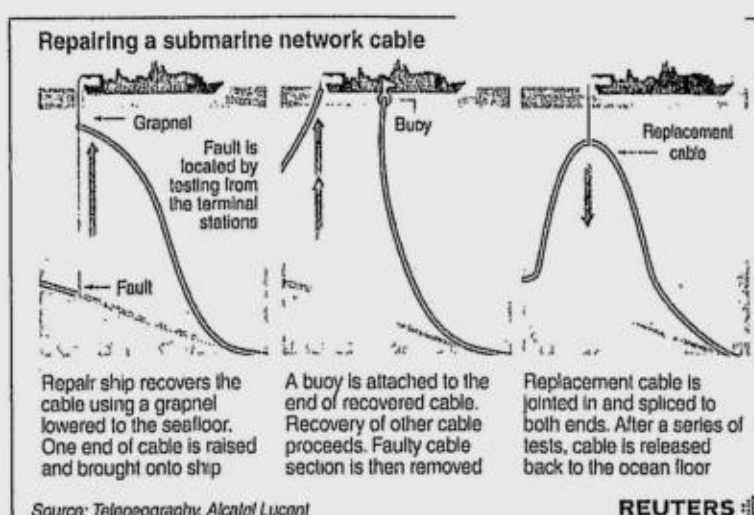
Froilan M. Castelo, Globe Telecom Inc. regulatory affairs head, said that Dec. 31 was one of the peak days for international voice calls and text messages.

The others are Dec. 25, Feb. 14, Mother's Day and Good Friday.

Much of the outbound calls and SMS are made by friends and families of overseas Filipino workers to such locations as the United States, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan and the Middle East.

Connections to the United States, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan have been disrupted since Wednesday.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) would not say how much revenue it may lose on Dec. 31 but encouraged customers "to send their New Year greetings to friends and loved ones abroad



Source: Telegography, Alcatel Lucent

REUTERS

early and avoid the last-minute rush at New Year's Eve."

In an advisory, PLDT said it was rerouting voice and Internet traffic so it could handle its normal volume. This includes mission-critical services for key corporate customers such as call centers, banks and semi-conductor companies.

As for mobile voice calls and SMS abroad, PLDT unit Smart Communication Inc. said it restored international roaming services to Taiwan, South Korea, Japan and Yemen.

Bayantel spokesperson John Rojo said the company's voice links were not affected but there was a 10-percent reduction in In-

ternet bandwidth for subscribers.

Digital spokesperson Bill Pamintuan could not be reached for comment.

Carriers' revenue from Internet services may not be affected because charging is based on a fixed monthly service fee, according to Globe's Castelo.

It is a different story for Internet cafes that depend on hourly rentals, according to managers.

Adeste Bordonas Garbe, Netopia Internet Cafe's supervisor for the Makati Cinema Square branch, said that as of yesterday, about half of prospective clients left upon being advised of continued disruptions.

Those who tried to use the In-

ternet cut short their rental time.

"Chatters and e-mail users are most affected, gamers are not so inconvenienced (except for the slower connection at certain times)," said Chris Ng, who owns and manages the Cyber King Internet cafe in Caloocan City.

"Internet shops have a different client mix depending on location and services, but for my shop, about 50 percent of potential clients have been lost due to disrupted services," Ng said.

Repairs to take weeks

As to when outbound telco services may be normalized, PLDT said it may take some time.

"According to the international consortia operating the undersea cable systems damaged by the recent earthquake, it may take several weeks to complete needed repairs," the advisory said.

Six out of seven submarine cable systems of the regional network, which accounted for 90 percent of the region's telecom capacity, were broken in the quake and its aftershocks, according to the Office of the Telecommunications Authority in Hong Kong.

The cables link countries in North and Southeast Asia to each other and to North America.

OWWA lines also disrupted

By Jerome Aning

SLOWER INTERNET SERVICES CAUSED BY the earthquake in Taiwan disrupted the local services of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration.

Gloria Taule of the Owwa's workers assistance unit said her office could not follow up assistance to several relatives of overseas Filipino workers because the agency's e-mail services stopped on Wednesday.

"We have a slowdown in services, but it's a good thing that it's a holiday season so we don't expect many people flocking here," she told reporters Thursday.

Taule, case officer for Riyadh, Jeddah and Kuwait, said Owwa's database, which is con-

nected to the Internet, became inaccessible. The database is constantly updated by inputs from Owwa's central and regional offices and the various Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLO).

The workers assistance unit handles complaints about missing relatives abroad, delayed remittances and other complaints such as maltreatment and contract substitution that are brought to Owwa's attention.

Aside from the absence of official e-mail links, the unit also could not generate the required forms for the relatives of OFWs who go to Owwa.

For instance, Taule said her office was not able to assist two siblings who wanted their brother, who is working in Saudi Arabia, to return home to see their gravely ill father.

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*Sa bagong taon,
mas maaga, mas mabilis,
mas mabuti!*

Let your New Year's greeting rise above the clutter. Be early in making those calls to your family and friends.

Telecommunication services have been nearly normalized following the recent earthquake near Taiwan. But New Year's Eve will bring a surge of calls far beyond normal traffic levels. To ensure that your calls are trouble-free, we suggest that you call your loved ones earlier rather than later.

Be the first to greet your loved ones Happy New Year!





Rizal's 'Kalinga'

IN INTERNAL EXILE IN DAPITAN, JOSE RIZAL SET about teaching the children and making himself useful to the local community. The outline of a Philippine map he created has been restored. We only have a reproduction of the house in which he lived, but we can claim that one of Rizal's teaching aids has survived down the generations. What Rizal set out to do in Dapitan, he always espoused in his writings: to devote his knowledge to the building of a civic consciousness that, he believed, was the bedrock of a positive political consciousness.

EDITORIAL

Rizal was always aware that even as he was hailed as a prophet, there would be others who would be more than willing to be false prophets. In his essay, "The Philippines a Century Hence," he observed: "All the petty insurrections that have occurred in the Philippines were the work of a few fanatics or discontented soldiers, who had to deceive and humbug the people or avail themselves of their powers over their subordinates to gain their ends. So they all failed. No insurrection had a popular character or was based on a need of the whole race or fought for human rights or justice, so it left no ineffaceable impressions, but rather when they saw that they had been duped, the people bound up their wounds and applauded the overthrow of the disturbers of their peace! But what if the movement springs from the people themselves and based its causes upon their woes?"

It is an irony of history that the man so hated by the institutional Church of his time should have expressed what has become a central message of the Church under a native hierarchy: what we do not need, he might as well have said, was not Charter change but character change. Put another way, and with an example also dear to the hearts of present-day Filipino prelates, what Rizal advocated in his day has finally seen fruition in the present. For what Rizal set out to do was the 19th century's first stirrings of the movement we now know as Gawad Kalinga.

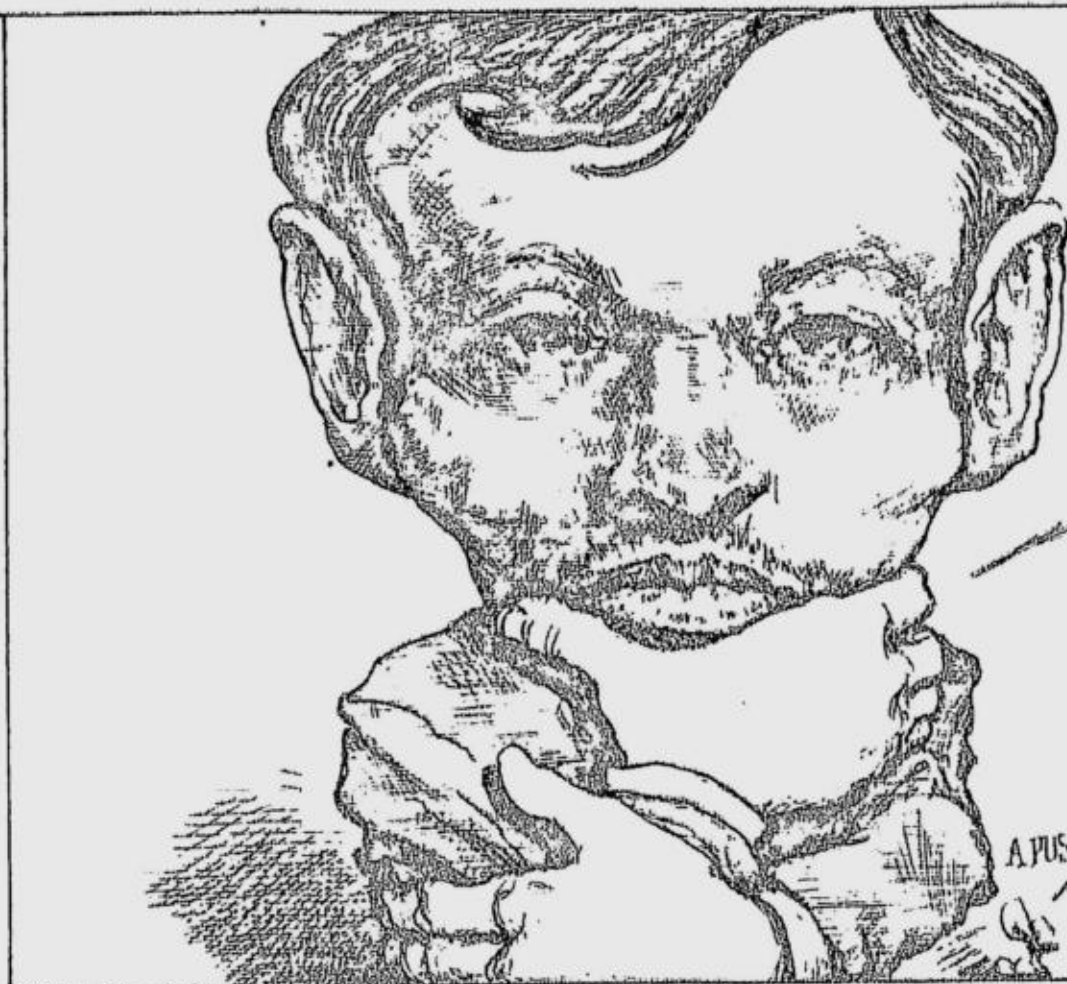
If the past year has been one of political failure, then it has also been one of tremendous success for those who would put community building ahead of politicking. Revolutionary transitional councils, military withdrawals of support, "calibrated preemptive responses," and impeachment complaints decided on the basis of the numbers and not the merits—all these have been facets of a destructive, desperate and, yes, degenerate political system, while what has caught the world's imagination and respect has been Gawad Kalinga.

Indeed, if leaders of both the opposition and the administration have found themselves acting like generals with no foot soldiers, commanders of political forces met with indifference by the great democratic mobilizers—the middle—it is because the middle has been in the thick of efforts such as Gawad Kalinga and conspicuously absent from the political field of battle.

But efforts to bring different social strata together, and which strive to find a way for different economic classes to work together and not against each other, are only a fresh start but can never be the end-all and be-all of community involvement. And this is where Rizal's example can inspire those who have found meaning and satisfaction in community-building. If in the past, the disappointments born of both Edsa people power revolts led to a drifting away from political action, then those involved in efforts such as Gawad Kalinga have to realize their building communities cannot absolve them of their duty to build a better nation.

A better nation will not arise simply because houses have been built. The empowerment and the breaking of the chains of despair and social mistrust must lead to clean, credible elections and bring to power a national leadership that reflects and lives up to a renewed sense of civic virtue. The honors that have been rendered Gawad Kalinga, for example, aren't laurels on which its volunteers should rest. They are, instead, challenges to expand its achievements in the public sphere.

The past year has seen political divisions deepen in our society, and yet there have been earnest efforts to close that divide, economically and socially. As it was in Rizal's lifetime, the Filipino still waits for those who can bridge the gap between social and political action.



"... IF THE GOVERNMENT
DRIVES US TO REVOLUTION...
THEN I TOO SHALL ADOPT
VIOLENT MEANS."

— DR. JOSE RIZAL

A PUSHOVER HE'S NOT.

Remembering Rizal

TODAY IS THE 110TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE execution of Jose Rizal in Bagumbayan. Without meaning any sarcasm or reproach, I am wondering how many of our young people today appreciate the significance of that event which made our country free.

It is regrettable that what they may choose to remember is not the martyrdom of Rizal but the killing of John Lennon 26 years ago in New York. It was he who boasted that the Beatles had become more popular than Jesus Christ, and perhaps he was right. Some of their fans, including not a few from our own country, may really consider the songsters and their rock music more appealing.

I recently found that the 2006 calendar issued by the Supreme Court apparently does not place much importance either on Dec. 30. It is simply printed in red and called Rizal Day. There is a brief note that it marks the oath-taking of President Manuel L. Quezon in 1941 and President Ferdinand Marcos in 1969, both for their second terms. But there is no reminder of Rizal's sacrifice in 1896 as if it did not deserve any mention at all.

If the Supreme Court assumed that every Filipino knows about Rizal, it must be out of step with the times. Many citizens may now simply take Rizal as the name of a province or the statue at the Luneta or that old memorial stadium in Manila. Even the plaster busts of him that used to adorn the old libraries in my grandfather's time have disappeared. The Noli-Fili books are compulsory reading in our schools, but many students prefer Harry Potter.

Before the war, Rizal Day was celebrated with programs and parades mostly organized by the Veteranos de la Revolucion. But the Katipuneros are all gone like the former veneration of the hero. The memory of the great

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz



man is dissipating except in the usual street signs, which are mixed with reminders of the martial law period like Imelda Avenue and Marcos Highway. Marcos tried to replace Rizal as the foremost Filipino hero but his ugly cement face in La Union was mangled instead by his irate victims.

Remembrance of Rizal is fast disappearing when it ought to be cherished and honored by all Filipinos. It was he who, more effectively than any one else among his compatriots, unified the disparate inhabitants of our archipelago into one nation. It was he who made them share a common rage against the foreign intruder and a common aspiration for the freedom of their land.

Without him, and I say this without offense to those who followed his leadership and example, our people may still be under the yoke of some alien ruler. Consider that we were oppressed by Spain for more than three centuries and it was only when Rizal protested its villainies that Bonifacio's armed revolution began to smolder. It was the execution of Gomburza, to whom Rizal dedicated the "Noli Me Tangere," that ignited the spark of resistance against the Spanish government. But it was Rizal who fanned the flames into a bright conflagration.

Rizal awakened the national conscience from its lethargy not through the force of arms

but with the armies of his pen. These were the "Noli" and "El Filibusterismo," his "Letter to the Women of Malolos," his youthful poems for the Motherland, his "Mi Ultimo Adios" that he secreted in a lamp in Fort Santiago hours before his death, and other irrefutable accusations against the Spaniards. His words were like mighty legions that won for our country the freedom we now enjoy.

Let not the idiot who once criticized me for speaking in English at a nationalistic program belittle Rizal's writings because most of them were in the tyrant's tongue. That jingoist who is now a National Artist must think his expertise in Tagalog has exalted his empty mind. Sentiments are best expressed in words one knows best and Spanish was for Rizal his sharp and avenging sword.

That is why, if I may digress, I heartily support the bill restoring English as the medium of instruction in our public schools. During the pre-war years, that educational policy made us the most proficient English-speaking people in the whole continent of Asia and many other parts of the world. English is still, along with Filipino, our official languages under our Constitution. Filipino is a beautiful language that is easily learned without formal instruction, but it is not useful for international communication.

To go back to Jose Rizal, I hope we can revive the reverent sentiments of gratitude to him for his efforts in releasing us from foreign bondage. Political rhetoric is not enough to keep his heroism alive. Let us remember that he forsook the enticements of his youthful and gifted life and embraced instead the ultimate sacrifice for the welfare of his country. That is the best homage we can pay the greatest hero of our race.

Positives and negatives

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod



led rather than investment-led, with investment in plant (construction) and equipment actually declining. This casts doubt on the sustainability of the growth. (3) Whether the poor are benefiting from that growth is so far also in doubt, since there is no empirical evidence as yet, but the expenditure compression resulting from the determination to reduce the budget deficit may indicate that we are not giving more in law to those who have less in life.

On the political front, some of the most dismaying negatives are associated with the Office of the Ombudsman's sins of commission or omission: (1) the mental gymnastics—contortions, really—it went through to enable it to come to the bizarre conclusion that nobody, whether in the Commission on Elections or out of it, was responsible for what the Supreme Court called "illegal and gravely abusive acts of Comelec"; (2) its failure to act on the charges of attempted murder, frustrated murder and murder filed against Abra Gov. "Vic-syd" Valera early last year, which failure could have contributed to the present violence-ridden situation in that province. Then there is Congress' failure (for the nth time) to pass the national government budget for 2007, as well as not only the delay but the mangling of the new election automation law, such that the country's foremost election lawyers from both camps have said that the planned pilot-testing will wreak havoc on the 2007 elections. The executive department's numerous flip-flops, its tendency to impose deadlines to solve problems (which are never met), and the support it

has given to or the appointment of dubious characters have reduced confidence at best and created antipathy at worst.

Now for the New Year resolutions. Here is where we stop blaming others for the situation we find the country in, and start looking to ourselves. Because if we want a better year ahead for ourselves and for the country, we will have to work—and work together at it. No one is exempt; anyone who tries to be a free rider in the endeavor is not worthy to be called a Filipino.

In this connection, Alexander L. Lacson's "12 Little Things Every Filipino Can Do To Help Our Country" is an excellent guide. I first saw his list in a laminated card given to me almost two years ago. It was impressive in its simplicity, and I stuck it in the corner of my bathroom mirror to serve as a constant reminder. It has now been expanded into a little monograph, with accompanying forewords/messages from Cory Aquino, Eggie Apostol, Fr. Ruben Tanseco and Manny Pangilinan—all of whom seem as impressed as I am.

Lacson begins his expanded version with some very quotable quotes, my favorite being from Ben Franklin: "Yes, we must indeed all hang together, or we shall all hang separately."

The 12 little things: (1) Follow traffic rules. Follow the law. (2) Whenever you buy or pay for anything, always ask for an official receipt. (3) Buy Filipino. (4) When you talk to others, especially foreigners, speak positively about us and our country. (5) Respect our traffic officer, policeman and soldier. (6) Do not litter. Dispose of your garbage properly. Segregate. Recycle. Conserve. (7) Support your church. (8) During elections, do your solemn duty. (9) Pay your employees well. (10) Pay your taxes. (11) Adopt a scholar or a poor child. (12) Be a good parent. Teach your kids to follow the law and love our country.

They are my New Year resolutions. I hope they will be yours, too.
Happy New Year!

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Lim's uncommon courage in supporting VFA

THE VOICE OF SEN. ALFREDO LIM, SPEAKING about the need for the Philippines to fulfill its obligations under the Visiting Forces Agreement, was like a breath of fresh air, given all the contorted interpretations of its vital provisions. Considering that very few senators who were in the Senate when it ratified the VFA in May 1999 have had the guts to air their thinking on this issue, Lim is displaying uncommon courage. He's so unlike his colleagues, who seem to be waiting to see which is the more popular stand, or who are afraid to displease the Left.

Lim, who is a lawyer, invokes Par. 6, Art. V of the VFA which provides: "The custody of any US personnel over whom RP is to exercise jurisdiction shall immediately reside with the US military authorities, if they so request, from the commission of the offense until completion of all judicial proceedings." He argues that "judicial proceedings" refers to the entirety of the judicial process until its final resolution by the appellate court; this is underscored by the fact that the treaty uses the word "all" which to him means "entire or total, and connotes several stages." Lim argues that if the intention is to refer only to the proceedings in the regional trial court, there would have been no need to use the word or the treaty could have specifically said so, but it did not. He notes that it's a basic rule in statutory construction that if a statute is clear, plain and free from ambiguity, "it must be given its literal meaning and applied without interpretation." Lim also says that under Art. 13 of the Declaration of Rights and Duties of States, adopted by the International Law Commission in 1949, it is the duty of RP "to carry out its treaty obligation and it cannot invoke provisions of its Constitution or laws as an excuse for failure to perform that duty."

Even non-lawyers can see this plainly. Unfortunately, Judge Benjamin Pozon, who was recommended to the bench by "The Firm," insists on his own interpretation of Art. V, which threatens to damage RP-US relations and panders to the militant elements. I'm not worried so much about those relations, for I'm not very fond of the Kano

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



(in the past 30 years I've visited the United States only four times). But as a Filipino I want to do what's right, and I worry about our standing in the international community. If we cannot uphold a commitment like the VFA, which nation would trust us or take us seriously?

I hope—and there are many who also feel this way—that the Court of Appeals, to which the US authorities appealed the custody issue, which the RP government supported, would rule speedily, as every day that it fails to do so damages our international standing. Under international law, a commitment is a commitment, no matter if we don't like some aspects of it. If the VFA has disagreeable provisions, let's renegotiate it, but for as long as it's in force, we are morally bound to honor it.

Recently, Los Angeles-based designer Monique Lhuillier came home to show why she's now the hottest dresser to Hollywood stars. But in recent weeks another member of this prominent Cebu clan, Edna Lhuillier, also warmed the hearts of her guests during her 60th birthday celebration at the Mandarin Hotel in Makati. And since we celebrated the Feast of the Holy Family last Sunday, it's fitting and proper to recall Edna's message. In front of their guests, she acknowledged her love for her husband, Ambassador to Rome Philippe Lhuillier, in their 38 years together, and said she looked forward to many more years with him. Philippe, deeply touched, thanked the Lord for giving him Edna for his wife, and acknowledged that he couldn't have done all that he did in life without her constant love and support. In this age where the family is constantly under threat, such unabashed manifestations of love and support are always welcome.

This brings to mind the responsorial psalm last Sunday: "O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways! By the labor of your hands you shall eat. You will be happy and prosper. Your wife like a fruitful vine in the heart of your house; your children like shoots of the olive, around your table..."

Recently I aired an appeal for donations to the Alay sa Kawal (ASK) Foundation, which was founded in August 1987 by a group of professionals, led by Ambassador Edgardo Espiritu as chair and lawyer Ramon Pedrosa as president. ASK is the oldest NGO dedicated to the welfare of widows and orphans of soldiers killed in action and the families of those permanently disabled due to combat injuries. It gives the families P30,000 each, a pittance nowadays, but the amount helps tide them over as they work for the release of their pensions. Since its inception, ASK has helped close to 5,000 such families. In recent months, the casualty list has grown longer, taxing ASK's resources. Today the program is in danger of collapsing for lack of funds. Hence the appeal for donations.

That the families of slain and injured soldiers deserve help is quite evident. At the wake for the late retired Brig. Gen. and party-list Rep. Ernesto Gidaya a few weeks ago, I talked with Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano, commanding general of the Southern Luzon Command. I asked him about the AFP's participation in rescue and relief operations in Bicol during the two recent typhoons. He said that although the AFP camp in Pili, Albay, was 90 percent damaged, the soldiers were first on the scene in Daraga, Guinobatan, Sto. Domingo, Camalig and Legazpi City. Their first job was to clear roads and highways of massive roadblocks in order to facilitate relief efforts and then to locate missing people. The soldiers had no time to think of their own welfare, said Yano.

I think this generous spirit is common to various AFP units, and their orphaned families deserve your help. Call Allen Melendres at ASK in Camp Aguinaldo, Tel. Nos. 9129580 or 9116001 loc. 6837.

Elections and explosives

WHO IS MICHAELANGELO ZUCE AND WHY IS he saying these things about possible opponents in the race for representative of the first district of Bukidnon? One would have thought Zuce had grown tired of the limelight after his requisite 15 minutes of fame as a witness in the Senate hearing on irregularities in the 2004 elections. But now here he has surfaced once again, declaring that he will contest the seat against his uncle, Virgilio Garcillano.

Well, we all know who Garcillano, better known as "Garci," is. He has enjoyed far more than 15 minutes in the national spotlight, although he faded from the scene somewhat until recently when a panel of state prosecutors cleared him of all charges filed by a Senate committee. But with Garci making a comeback, it seems Zuce is not far behind. And I have a suspicion that Zuce's announcement of his candidacy is only in reaction to the endorsement given by Malacañang to Garci's electoral aspirations.

My strongest reaction, however, was to Zuce's dismissal of the qualifications of Socorro Acosta, a former congresswoman and mayor herself and mother of incumbent Rep. Nereus Acosta. "Ma'am Socorro may already be too old. She might no longer have what it takes to mount an effective campaign," he was quoted as saying.

Having met and talked at length with "Ma'am Socorro," and having heard stories told about her energy and drive, and seeing first-hand the fruits of such hard work, such as the network of women's groups which have benefited from the "Grameen-style" micro-credit program she and her son started, I can honestly say that she has much more than it takes to mount an effective campaign and serve effectively as Bukidnon congresswoman.

The latest word is that opposition leaders are determined to field a single opposition candidate against Garci, who they believe was the brains behind the alleged fraudulent conduct of the 2004 presidential elections. Since Nerio Acosta is a stalwart of the Liberal Party, it's not such a stretch to believe that his mother enjoys the backing of the LP, and will be supported by other opposition parties.

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



BUT will opposition unity and a solid ticket be enough to defeat Garci, who is known as a wily electoral operator, relied on reportedly by politicians from across the party spectrum to create miracles at the counting, canvassing and certifying phases of elections?

"Our game plan is to prevent cheating, and if possible, to support one candidate," Sen. Rodolfo Biazon told the media when asked what the opposition would do in the event of a Garci candidacy. But if Garci, with the help of operators around the country, was able to pull off alleged fraud on a national level in 2004, what's to prevent him from using his own network and his wiles to achieve a victory at the lowly district level?

Perhaps Garci's own history can be used against him. This is a man, after all, who chose to go into exile—abroad, or just in Mindanao, as he claimed—rather than testify on what he knew about the 2004 elections. And despite the agony he put the country through, plunging the Arroyo administration into a crisis of credibility, Garci has never been called into account.

Should the people of Bukidnon reward Garci for his alleged role in manipulating the results of the last presidential elections? And what sort of credibility would he enjoy as a legislator when his very name stands for deception and deviousness? I really hope voters in the first district of Bukidnon will not only vote wisely and well, but also remain vigilant and resist the blandishments of a political operator like Virgilio Garcillano.

HEALTH Secretary Francisco Duque has been

making the rounds of TV talk shows, news conferences and public gatherings since the start of December with a single message: celebrate the holidays safely and peacefully. Duque says he was alarmed by statistics that showed that the number of injuries caused by fireworks and other pyrotechnic materials increased by more than 100 percent compared to the same period last year.

It's clear that a sustained public information and education campaign is needed to convince Filipinos that one need not risk the loss of a limb, an eye or one's life just to welcome the New Year in style.

Now a new technology, in the form of the "PVC boga," threatens to result in even more injuries and deaths, even now accounting for almost half of all reported fireworks-related injuries during the holiday season.

The "PVC boga" is a new-age innovation on the traditional bamboo cannon, long employed by gangs of boys to create a loud, booming sound to welcome the New Year. Instead of a thick hollow bamboo pole, though, today's street celebrators employ a piece of PVC pipe, to which a triggering device and even a telescopic sight have been attached, giving it the appearance of a bazooka. Perhaps it's this "martial" image that makes it such a cool holiday accessory—that and the relatively low cost and availability.

I REMEMBER ranting about the "PVC boga" and the dangers it posed during a reunion of the David clan recently and being shocked to discover that many of our nephews not only had their own "PVC boga," they also made and sold them!

I can only wish the health secretary well in his public relations campaign. But I'm afraid exhortations to do the right thing alone may not effectively bring down the numbers of injuries rushed to emergency rooms tomorrow night. Perhaps a more effective tactic might be to make fireworks, especially the mini-explosives in the market, more expensive and more difficult to access.

The "PVC boga" might be better regulated, too, with higher prices bringing down demand and thereby drastically reducing injuries.

Japan's war guilt revisited

"IT IS OUR OBLIGATION AS JAPAN'S MOST influential newspaper to tell our readers who was responsible for starting the Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War." So writes Tsuneo Watanabe, editor in chief of Japan's (and the world's) most widely circulated newspaper, Yomiuri Shimbun, in the introduction to the book "From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor: Who Was Responsible."

Watanabe, who is now in his 80s and served in the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II, was bothered by the way unfinished business concerning the war continued to hinder Japan's progress. As a remedy, he set up a War Responsibility Re-Examination Committee at his newspaper to undertake a 14-month investigation into the causes of Japan's Pacific War.

Watanabe tells us that the committee concluded that "not only high-ranking government leaders, generals and admirals should shoulder the blame." According to the committee, "field officers were often more influential than even the Emperor, war ministers, and chiefs of staff in making decisions to go to and escalate the wars, and were responsible for many atrocities."

It has never been easy for a nation to face up honestly to the bitter fact of having committed war crimes, genocide, unjustified foreign aggression, or having mistreated and killed its own people. Japan is no exception. Although there have been numerous initiatives to investigate its war guilt, especially its occupation of China, there has not yet been an official effort comparable to what the Germans undertook to take collective responsibility for their war crimes.

While Yomiuri's unique public effort is not a government initiative, it comes as close as Japan will probably ever get to conducting an acceptable "official" inquiry and offering an adequate apology. Its

WORLD VIEW

Orville Schell



style is almost scientific—factual, staccato-like, and unemotional—and it goes a long way toward meeting China's demand for a convincing investigation and an act of contrition that might allow the bitter and still poisonous past to be overcome.

Watanabe laments the fact that after Japanese war criminals were tried by the Tokyo Tribunal of 1951, "No efforts were made in the name of Japan or the Japanese people to look into where responsibility for the war rested." As a result, "there can be no genuinely honest and friendly dialogue with those countries that suffered considerable damage and casualties in the wars with Japan."

Indeed, Yomiuri's report may well have helped convince Japan's new Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to go to China immediately after being elected to seek better bilateral relations.

China's leaders seem to have taken note of this moment of Japanese remorse. This implies a ray of hope for a bilateral relationship—the most important in Asia—that over the past two decades has been battered by Japan's reluctance to face its past, which has become a lightning rod for overheated nationalist sentiment on both sides.

But does the Yomiuri study go far enough? While it assigns responsibility to Japan for World War II, and even unflinchingly names the political and military leaders who bear responsibility, one can still detect a whiff of reluctance in its failure

to fully describe some of Japan's war-time actions. For example, the horrors of the Nanjing Massacre in 1937, when Japanese soldiers killed up to 250,000 Chinese, many of whom were civilians, are given little more than a brief mention.

But it would be a pity if China's leaders did not endorse this acknowledgement of Japanese guilt as a manifestation of Japan's willingness to repent. The damaged bilateral relationship has only made China's desire for a "peaceful rise" more uncertain. At the same time, it has left Japan's long sought transcendence of its war guilt and quasi-pariah status incomplete. Watanabe and Yomiuri Shimbun have provided a rare opportunity that should be seized for the greater good of China and Japan and the world.

Of course, it is always easier to export blame than to shoulder it. And, true, no Japanese prime minister has yet fallen to his knees in Nanjing the way German Chancellor Willy Brandt did on the site of the Warsaw Ghetto, where he apologized for the crimes of Germany by saying, "No people can escape from their history."

But that was in 1970, when memories of the war's ravages were fresh. Now, over half-a-century has elapsed. "If things are left as they are," writes Watanabe, "a skewed perception of history—without knowledge of the horrors of the war—will be handed down to future generations."

It would be an immensely encouraging sign of China's growing maturity if its leaders used this moment to look beyond the bitter past toward a new future with Japan.

Project Syndicate
Orville Schell is a renowned expert on China and dean of the School of Journalism at the University of California-Berkeley.

Smile of an angel

I WAS COMPLAINING ABOUT BEING FORCED TO SPEND the holidays with strangers. But at least, I told myself, I was being assigned to the pediatrics department, not the emergency room which can be hell with so many people getting injured by exploding firecrackers.

It hardly helped. New Year means family. New Year means going to grandmother's house. New Year means being with cousins. Fireworks. Firecrackers. Food, and more food. Not blood pressure monitoring. Not scout work. Not hospital food.

YOUNG BLOOD

Louise Lane Gutierrez

This was the me I was trying to change. The new me, I was hoping, would project my humanity and optimism. No, not the cheerleader kind of optimism, but the confidence of someone who knew that everything had a purpose, that I was destined to be at this place, at this hour for a purpose.

I did a recount of my blessings. One, I'm a nerd. Another is that I can draw. Not really much to boast of, but that is all I have.

That was when I met Abigail. She had leukemia and a brain tumor. She was only 7 years old then.

When I first saw her, she was vomiting because of the effects of chemotherapy. I wasn't assigned to her, but when she cried, I felt sorry for her. There are some things children should be protected from, but hard as we try, we really cannot order cancer cells to just go away. Just seven years on this earth, and this is what she gets. Not fair.

As soon as I finished with my patient, I went to Abigail. I introduced myself and asked her why she was crying. She was a bit hesitant to open up to me. But I grew up with kids, and most kids I know love it when grown-ups talk (or those who pretend to be a grown-up like me) to them about cartoons. I was schooled in Nickelodeon TV and the Cartoon Network, which my little sister watched all the time. So we talked about Helga and Arnold, about Buttercup, Bubbles and the other girl whose name I keep forgetting... Mojojo!

I drew a Powerpuff Girl (it's easy once you know how to draw circles of different sizes) and Abigail laughed. I knew the pain didn't disappear, but for that one brief moment, she forgot about leukemia. About cancer. About death.

She wasn't being a patient; I wasn't being a doctor. She was being a kid; I was being her friend. So what was supposed to be a one-time visit became an everyday happening, with me bringing her drawings of whatever cartoon character I thought of on that particular day. She looked forward to looking at them and she kept reminding me to come back with more.

On New Year's Eve, I gave her this headband with "Happy New Year" written on it. It looked good on her, and I felt good about giving it to her.

When the New Year party fever died down, I sat alone on the empty hallway and my thoughts wandered to my family. They were most probably dancing. They were most probably laughing. Reconnecting. Fighting. Crying. Living.

I sat there with no one to talk to. All of my fellow clerks were asleep. I felt the emptiness of the seat next to me. In the stillness of the night, I realized something important. I was complaining about going to work on holidays while these kids simply wanted to live for the holiday. So there: my meager drawing talent, my being on duty the day Abigail cried—they were destined to happen. The purpose? I was used to bring a smile on the child's face. Abigail's purpose? To remind me of the real meaning of the season. Angels are here on earth, and I've seen one smile.

I looked at the empty seat beside me. Someday I will share this seat with someone destined to fill it. One of these days, someone whose heart is filled with compassion, whose hands will fit mine, whose character is strong, will sit beside me and smile. But for now, these hands are free to hold the hands of Abigail and others like her.

Louise Lane Gutierrez, 26, is a doctor. She wrote this piece two years ago when she was doing 30-hour duties, one of which happened to fall during the holidays.

Drench the halls

Jon Jose C. Balintona

WHY DOESN'T IT RAIN ON NEW YEAR'S EVE? EVER since I came into this cruel world, I have never ever experienced a New Year which was blessed with a downpour. I don't believe anyone can recall a New Year's Eve during which he happily enjoyed the evening, within the silent confines of his own home and in the company of relatives, while it rained heavily, to the dismay of the millions of pyromaniacs and nincompoops who had escaped somehow from confinement.

Why doesn't it rain on New Year's Eve? Does some supernatural being wish it? Do we have a written contract with the god of rain to take the day off? Do burning firecrackers, gunpowder, shrieking children and roasted flesh appease the god of lightning and thunder? Or do the noxious gases produced by all those pyrotechnics influence the weather?

How many fingers must we lose before we learn to count the damage that these frenzied acts of merriment cause? How many eardrums must be shattered before we can hear our inner voice teach us the lessons we should have learned from past years?

Sorry to burst your bubble, but you must know by now what I wish for the New Year. I want rain! Yes, the cruel, unforgiving, non-sense kind of rain. And if Santa is listening, I want it to fall in the evening of Dec. 31. And I want it to last until the evening of Jan. 3, because by then, the firecracker-crazy people of this world will be busy preparing to go back to work or school.

I know why we can't make a decent list of New Year resolutions. I know why millions of people fail to follow their life-altering plans and schemes. It is because instead of silently contemplating and listening as the voice of conscience tells us things that need to be altered or erased from our lives on that faithful day, we are incessantly assailed by the crazy yells of people and the loud explosions of firecrackers that could stir the dead to rise from their graves. Such distractions can reduce our list of resolutions to a crumpled addition to our trash can.

Why do we like noise so much? Haven't we had enough of it during the past year? Isn't New Year's Eve about spending time with loved ones and talking about what the past year was like and how we can improve our lives in the coming year?

I really wish it would rain on New Year's Eve. That would be something. I want the rain to drive away all those noisy revelers and their deafening firecrackers—and to wash away the reminders of a sad and cruel year.

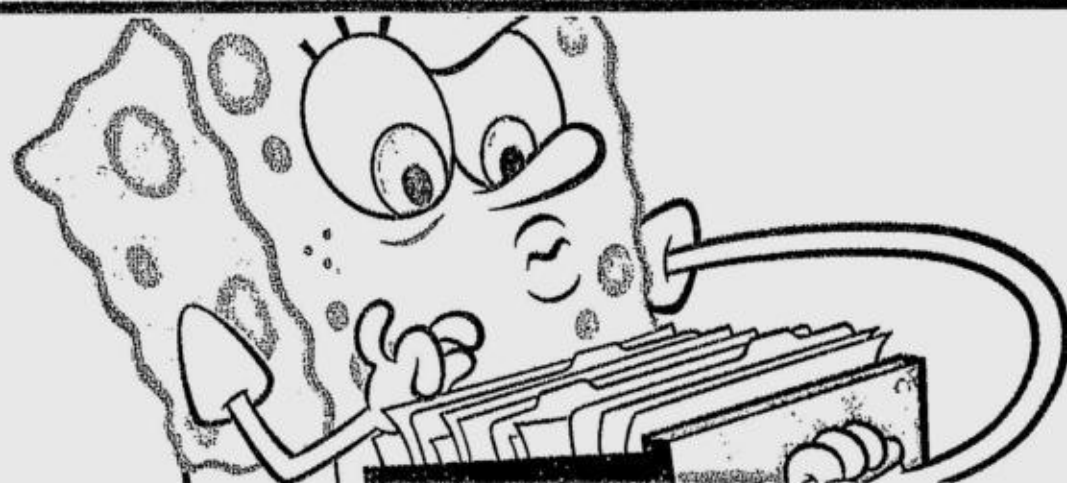
Jon Jose C. Balintona, 26, is a registered medical technologist.



VFA being interpreted the wrong way

THE VISITING FORCES AGREEMENT should not be used to protect servicemen convicted of committing crimes, such as rape.

—FLORENCIO FUCANAN,
2A Rue de Paris,
14100 Lisieux, France,
fucanf@nol.com



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Charter change possible without 'trapo' baggage

ABRAHAM LINCOLN HAD A LONG STRING of failures: as a businessman, as a farmer, even as a politician, in his first attempt to seek political office, in his first attempt to run for Congress, in his quest to become Speaker of the legislature, when he sought appointment to the US Land Office, when he ran for the US Senate, when his friends sought for him the US vice-presidential nomination, etc.

Yet, many consider Lincoln the greatest American president. What set him apart from losers who fell into oblivion was his capacity to rise much stronger every time he failed.

Failures, instead of becoming orphans of their originators, should be the source of strategic lessons and the precursor of great success.

There is truth in the statement that the movement for Charter change suffered from its sponsorship by an unpopular President. The mistake became more glaring when politicians, who epitomize the "trapo" description, took on the mantle.

Beyond the issue of sponsorship, there is the substantive issue of the content of the revisions proposed under the people's initiative and con-

stituent assembly. There were many provisions that were clearly meant to serve the interest of the ruling class. Retaining these provisions in future quests will doom the efforts even before they begin.

We realize that Dr. Jose Abueva gallantly argued in making the constitutional revision pristine and devoid of self-serving provisions. We also realize and appreciate his efforts in promoting the rights of global Filipinos.

We now collectively face the cynical attitude of many Filipinos, such that even a call for a constitutional convention is viewed as laden with special interests.

Be that as it may, we shall not be deterred by the setbacks sustained by the sponsors of Charter change. We face the future with unwavering hope that change is still possible, and will be pursued without the excess baggage of the ruling elite and traditional politicians.

—VICTOR S. BARRIOS,
moderator/convenor, Global Filipino Forum,
and chair, Global Filipinos Coalition;
LITO GUTIERREZ, moderator/convenor,
Global Filipino Forum, editor in chief,
Philippine News

Call for character change meant to protect status quo

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT: THE CHURCH IS against changing the status quo. And it wisely, no, wily sidesteps, no, shuts out the issue by calling for character change first. Which it knows cannot be done till our planet turns into a nova and Archbishop Angel Lagdameo et al. face The Almighty and are asked: "Have you accomplished what you have been tasked to do?"

They cannot answer yes because for cen-

turies they have tried and failed, miserably. All they can tell The Almighty is, sorry.

And because it shares in the loot of corruption, the Church turns a blind eye, looks the other way and plays dumb while its glib cohort, in candy-striped, circus barker suit, cons the mindless, no, naive, desperate poor to surrender the last centavos in their pockets.

—MANUEL GARCIA CALLEJA,
79 Umbel, Barangay Roxas, Quezon City

An unfinished task in rural electrification program

I WRITE IN REACTION TO THE ARTICLE titled "Albay power co-op needs recharging." (PDI, 11/23/06) The "recharging" should be focused not just on the Albay Electric Cooperative (Aleco) but on all of the country's 119 electric co-ops as well. While each co-op has its own unique set of problems, the goal of having their members own them in the real "cooperative" sense remains a great unfinished task.

If the six million households get to really own these co-ops, then this will be the assurance that they will be run with transparency and accountability. Genuine consumer ownership will even serve to obstruct efforts to build elitist, oligarchic, or politician-owned utilities camouflaged under the name of Epira reform.

It is a pity that the National Electrification Administration continues to peddle the untruth that electric co-ops are independent entities. It is true that the co-op members elect their board of directors. What the NEA fails to tell us is this: By force of its martial law-era charter, it is the NEA administrator who has the virtual say as to who shall manage a particular co-op; that the consent of the NEA administrator is necessary before the co-op may borrow from a private bank; and that all board resolutions of a co-op are subject to the intervention of the NEA administrator.

While the NEA indeed has the duty to help the co-ops through financing, in restoring power lines destroyed by typhoons, it must limit itself to just that—technical and financial assistance.

The NEA that has been responsible for placing its chosen general managers in Albay, Mindoro, Aklan, Bukidnon, Lanao, Baguio, Iarlag, Bohol and Iloilo for the past 30 years is part of the problem of corruption and non-accountability in those co-ops.

Sad to say, there will be general managers of co-ops who will peddle the lies of the NEA, if only to ensure that they stay in the good graces of the NEA when the time comes for them to seek approval for their retirement benefits.

The article also made mention of the loans that the AEC owes the NEA. These loans were, condoned by virtue of the Epira; therefore, these loans should have been written off as of June 26, 2001. Are we now made to understand that the NEA, contrary to law, still imposes them not only on Aleco's members but also on all co-op consumers nationwide?

It's time that we transferred the ownership of the co-ops from the NEA to the millions of ordinary consumers.

—RODOLFO PLOPINIO and LEAN DE LA CRUZ,
Alliance for Consumer Empowerment
(ACE), 69 Don Yulo Plaza, Makati City

GMA's paranoia

THE DEPORTATION OF BRIAN CAMPBELL revealed the Arroyo administration's extreme fear of the escalating global condemnation of its culpability in the continuing political killings in the Philippines. (PDI, 12/8/06)

Campbell is a lawyer and labor rights activist and works for the International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF), which is based in Washington, D.C. He was a delegate to the International Labor Solidarity Mission (ILSM) that investigated the extrajudicial killings in the country last May 2006. He is an active campaigner for workers' rights and human rights not just in the Philippines but throughout Asia and the world.

The Bureau of Immigration detained Campbell upon his arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport last Dec. 6 and interrogated him for nearly five hours, and finally deported him back to the United States via Hong Kong. He was due to attend the "Jobs and Justice Conference" in Cebu, a forum of labor rights advocates and a parallel activity to the Asean Business and Investment Summit. He was also scheduled to meet with the relatives of the late Bishop Alberto Ramento who was executed by suspected agents of the Philippine military two months ago, as well as with workers on strike at the Cavite Export Processing Zone.

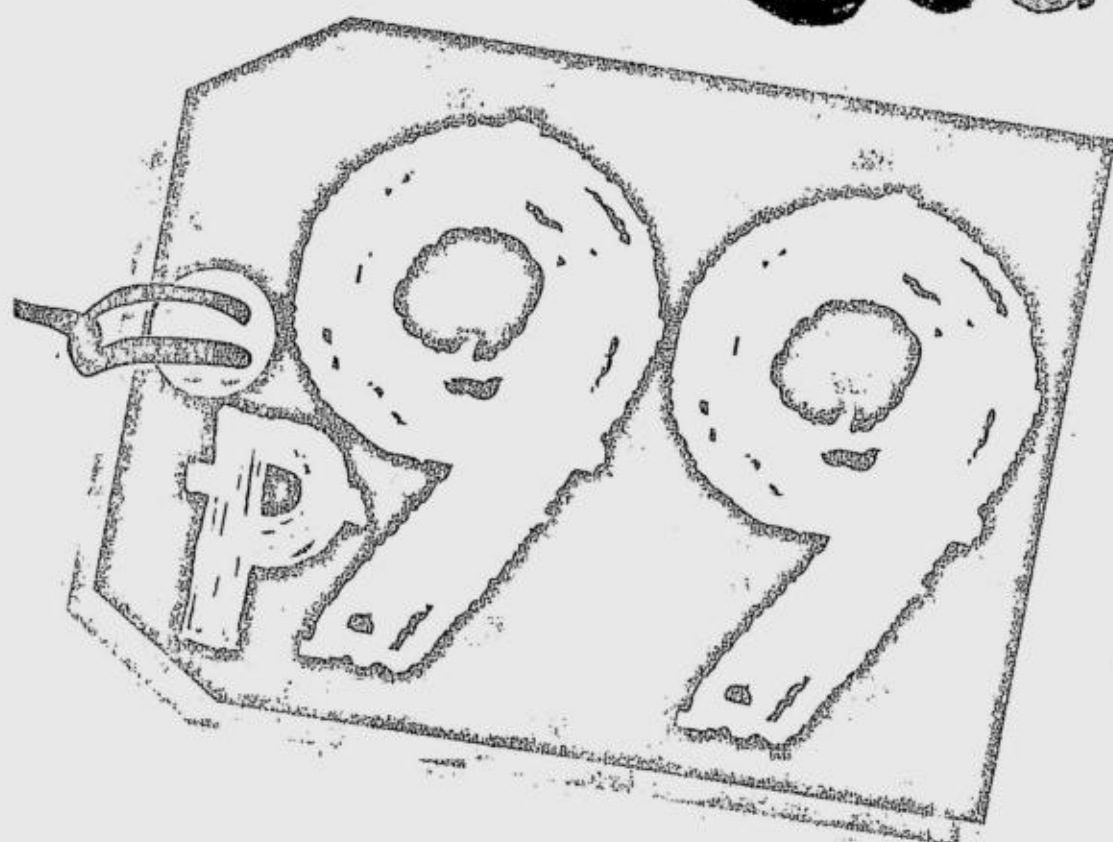
Campbell views the refusal of Philippine authorities to give an explanation for his deportation as just "a small part of the government's concerted long-standing campaign to silence the critics of the Arroyo regime and the political killings."

The Arroyo regime appears to be particularly paranoid these days about allowing the international community a first-hand glimpse of the real political situation in the Philippines. The 12th Asean Summit was postponed on the preposterous excuse that an impending typhoon was a threat to the participants. But the real threat that the Arroyo regime does not wish foreign observers to witness up close was the political storm created by her administration's attempt to change the Constitution in order to perpetuate her fascist rule.

Apart from her paranoia about the unceasing condemnation her government is receiving from the international community due to the unabated political killings, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is going to extreme lengths to prevent foreign eyes from confirming her political isolation from the people and from witnessing her tyrannical but wobbly rule.

—PAUL QUINTOS, executive director,
Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education &
Research Inc., Barangay Laging Handa, QC

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INQUIRER *Visayas*

Editor Jun Bandayrel
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Guinsaugon, Guimaras become the face of Visayas

By Nestor Burgos Jr.
and Vicente S. Labro

NATURAL AND man-made disasters ravaged the Visayas in 2006 that tested the people's resilience and faith to surmount great challenges.

Two heartbreaking events defined the images of Visayas this year: the Guinsaugon tragedy in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte in February and the oil spill in Guimaras in August.

Visayans, Cebuanos in particular, were hoping to end the year in a happy note with the hosting of the 12th Southeast Asian (Asean) Summit from Dec. 10 to 13. Instead, Cebu officials were left holding empty bags after Malacañang decided to postpone the event purportedly due to an incoming typhoon, even as some highly placed law enforcement sources would insist that it was because some suspected terrorists did manage to slip into the Philippines and therefore had the capacity to stage attacks in Cebu during the summit.

And while still coping with the millions of pesos in economic fallout that resulted from the postponement of the summit, Cebuano leaders are once again getting ready to host the summit that has been reset to Jan. 10 to 15.

And just as Visayans were settling down to celebrate Christmas Day in peace and quiet, disaster struck anew. Twenty four Christmas Day shoppers in Ormoc City died in a general merchandise store fire that was triggered by a lighted firecracker. Twenty one more were injured, one of whom died last Thursday while another has remained in critical condition.

YEARENDER

The Guinsaugon tragedy

The year started right until, in February, when five days of continuous rains hit the southern part of Leyte Island, causing the biggest disaster to hit Southern Leyte this year.

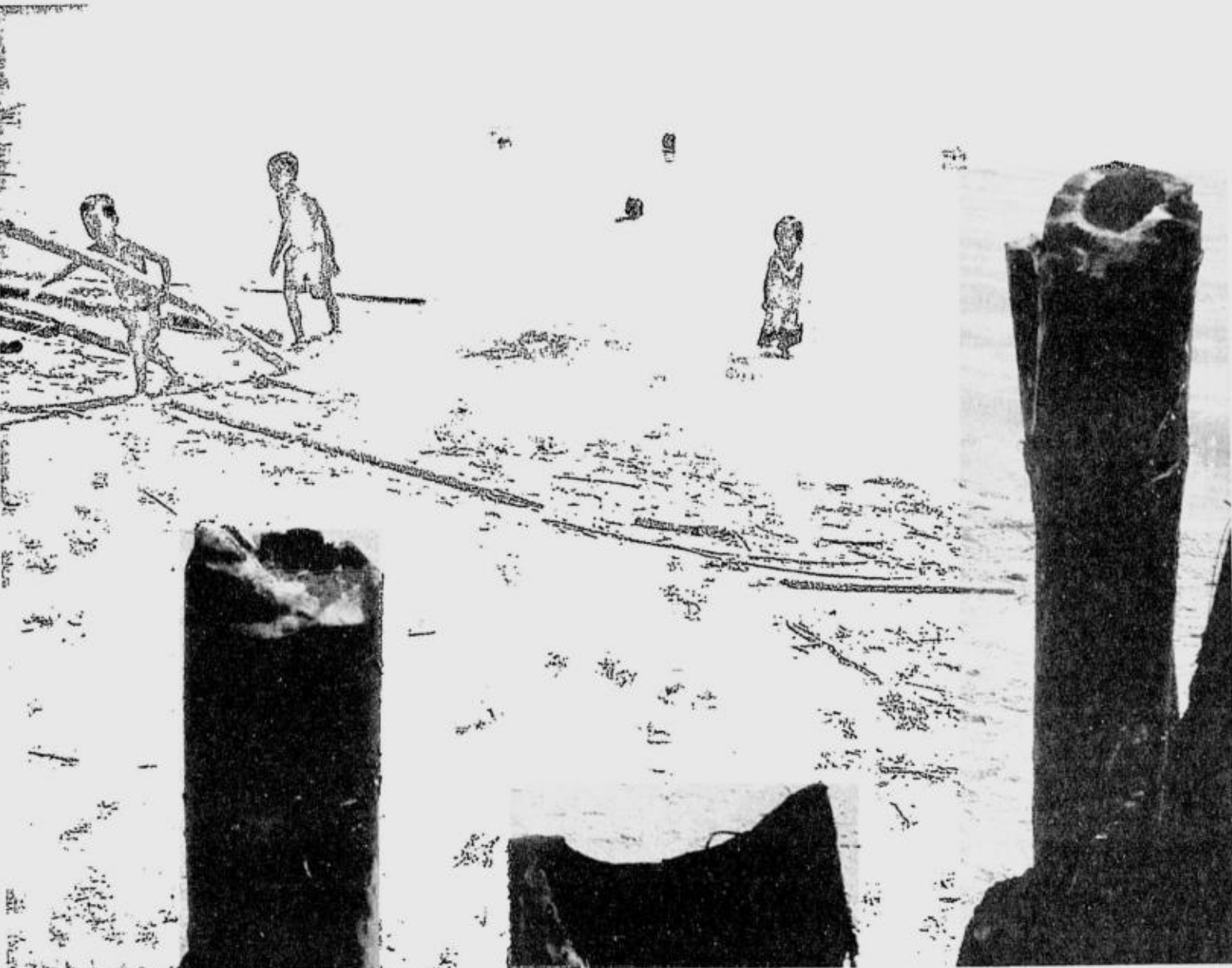
Continuous rains from February 8-12 had resulted in a landslide on Feb. 12, which killed seven people at Sitio Agas-Agas, Barangay Kahupian, Sogod town in Southern Leyte. The rains also destroyed many portions of the national highway, which the Department of Public Works and Highways estimated then to be worth P52.25 million.

Around that time, some 2,500 residents of San Francisco, Southern Leyte had moved to safer grounds as water continued to rise in their area. In nearby Liloan town, about 400 individuals from Barangays Catig and Malangsa, who were trapped in their villages by floods and landslide, were rescued by a Navy boat and moved to the town proper.

Five days after, the big disaster struck.

A big chunk of Mt. Kan-abag, which lies right along the line of the Philippine Fault and had been saturated by water during the continuous heavy rains, collapsed and slid down on a village at the foot of the mountain.

The Provincial Development



THE PETRON oil spill in Guimaras won't stop these boys from swimming in the once pristine waters of their coastal community. Not far from them are reminders of the bunker fuel sludge that altered theirs and their families' lives.

PHOTOS BY ARNOLD ALMAGEN

Council of Southern Leyte reported that 139 people were killed, 973 other individuals were missing and presumed dead, and 580 survived the Feb. 17 mudslide in Barangay Guinsaugon of St. Bernard town.

Aside from the survivors from Guinsaugon, nearly 3,000 people coming from two neighboring villages affected by the landslide and some nearby villages believed to be at risk of additional landslide, were evacuated to five evacuation centers in St. Bernard.

In the towns of Liloan, San Francisco and Sogod, where floods and landslides had occurred, some 3,850 families were evacuated due to the high levels of risks that more landslides would hit their places.

The tragedy in Guinsaugon has caught national and international attention and relief goods from the region, other places in the country and some foreign countries kept pouring into Southern Leyte. Until now, rehabilitation works for the displaced villagers are still going on.

Eastern Visayas was also hit this year by last least three typhoons—"Caloy," "Reming," and "Seniang." About 30 persons were reported dead and missing during these typhoons. Nearly P900 million worth of property, crops and infrastructure were reportedly destroyed by typhoons in 2006.

Guimaras oil spill

Semirara Island in Antique was still recovering from a massive oil spill that struck the island on December 2005 when a much big-

ger marine disaster occurred off the coasts of the island-province of Guimaras.

Previously known for its clean and white beaches and sweet mangoes, Guimaras was catapulted to national and international attention after the MT Solar I sank 640 meters deep 13.3 nautical miles southeast of the island on Aug. 11. The tanker was transporting 2.1 million liters of bunker fuel from Bataan to Zamboanga when it sank after encountering rough waters.

The oil spill is considered the worst in the country's history as oil sludge contaminated or destroyed the environment and the island's rich marine life including hundreds of hectares of mangroves, sea grass, corals, coastline, coral reef, seaweeds and fishponds.

The disaster also destroyed the livelihood of thousands of residents who rely mainly on fishing and gleaning as fish catch and shell gathering dropped to almost nothing.

The tourism industry of the island, one of its main income-earners, was battered after tourists cancelled bookings over reports and images of contaminated beaches and villages.

The oil spill directly affected 52 of the 98 villages of Guimaras and around half of its population of 151,194. The oil sludge also contaminated villages in the towns of Oton, Concepcion and Ajuy in Iloilo.

National and local government agencies and offices, nongovernment organizations and international groups raced against time to respond to the crisis, contain the spreading of the oil sludge and minimize the damage.

Hundreds of Guimaras residents were evacuated at the height of the contamination due to health risks after health officials quarantined a 100-meter radius from the shoreline of the affected villages of tests showed a very high level of toxicity in these areas.

Many residents especially children complained of illnesses associated with the oil sludge like respiratory diseases and skin irritations.

Children were also forced to stop going to school or had classes in makeshift classrooms because of the evacuation.

Criminal and administrative charges have been filed against Petron Corp. and the owners of Solar I for the sinking and oil spill.

The incident prompted calls

for stricter laws on oil pollution especially on the transport of hazardous materials over the country's waters.

Environmentalists and scientists called for comprehensive and science-based protocols on response efforts, prevention measures and rehabilitation programs regarding oil spills.

They noted that reactive response of government agencies especially at the national level and the lack of equipment and experience in addressing major oil spills like the incidents in Semirara and Guimaras.

Scientists said the full impact on the environment of the oil spill is yet to be felt and have called for continuous monitoring and research.

Volunteers, donors

But the tragedy also drew an outpouring of sympathy and support from nongovernment organizations, business firms and individuals from all walks of life who donated food, money, clothes, medicine and even their body hair to help contain the oil spill and address the needs of the affected residents.

Hundreds volunteered to manually clean up the affected coastline spending their weekends in Guimaras collecting oily debris.

National and international relief and funding agencies have also pledged their support to help rehabilitate the island and assist

the residents.

At the close of the year, the affected residents received compensation for economic losses from the International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Fund ranging from P4,800 to P32,000.

Typhoons Milenyo and Seniang also resulted in deaths and major damages to Panay Island especially in Capiz and Aklan provinces.

On Oct. 2, 22 people died when an overloaded jeep was swept away by currents and fell into the Tangyan River as it crossed the bridge in Sitio Songson, Barangay Barasan in Igbaras, Iloilo. Nineteen others went missing and were considered dead.

Several persons died and hundreds of millions of pesos worth of property and crops were destroyed when Typhoon Seniang ravaged Capiz and Aklan provinces on Dec. 9. Aklan was placed under a state of calamity and suffered flooding and blackouts.

The popular island-resort of Boracay also suffered major damages as strong winds and currents destroyed or damaged houses, resorts, motorboats, and electric and phone lines.

The controversy over land ownership in Boracay had grown more contentious after President Macapagal-Arroyo issued on May 22, a proclamation declaring more than half of the island

"alienable and disposable." The order opens commercial lots to public auction.

Owners of business resorts, expatriates and residents who have been claiming ownership for land they have been occupying for years protested the proclamation. They held protest actions and petitioned the Supreme Court to stop its implementation.

New People's Army rebels heightened its attacks on government troops killing an Army Captain Abelardo Motia in Dumarao town in Capiz on Aug. 5.

On Oct. 8, around 30 NPA rebels attacked the site of the P4-billion international airport project in Silay City in Negros Occidental. The rebels blew up two electronic control rooms of a cement batching plant of Korean firm Hanjin International, and the standby generator of the Takenaka Itochu Joint Venture System.

Clashes between government troops and the rebels continued in Western Visayas.

Achievers

In between the disasters, however, Eastern Visayas was so proud of having topped for five years in a row the National Achievement Tests for Grade 6 pupils as well as for high school freshmen and seniors that was conducted in March.

A schoolteacher from Calbayog City was also chosen as one of the country's outstanding teachers, while two mayors also got citations for good governance.

Southern Leyte got the first 10 places in the National Achievement Test conducted in March 2006 and taken by 35,000 Grade 6 pupils of public elementary schools nationwide. Southern Leyte also topped the NATs for high school freshmen and seniors.

In the list of Top 10 schools division in the NAT for fourth year students, six were from Eastern Visayas.

These were Southern Leyte (1st), Eastern Samar (2nd), Maasin City (3rd), Samar (5th), Northern Samar (7th), and Calbayog City (10th).

Meanwhile, a teacher has brought honor to Calbayog City after she was chosen this year as among the country's best teachers. Isabel Eman, a teacher of the San Policarpo National High School in Calbayog City, was one of the awardees of the Metrobank Foundation's Search for Outstanding Teacher 2005.

At least two of the region's politicians were in the limelight for garnering awards on good governance.

Mayor Marietta Porciuncula of Capocan, Leyte was given recognition by Galing Pook-UNDP for her gender-focused local governance while Calbayog City Mayor Mel Senen Sarmiento was awarded the Konrad Adenauer Medal of Excellence for making Calbayog a highly performing city. With a report from Edra L. Benedicto, Inquirer Visayas



RESIDENTS of Barangay Tando in Nueva Valencia town, the worst hit by the Petron oil spill in Guimaras, are slowly recovering from the ill-effects of the spill. Fishermen are now gearing up to return to their main source of livelihood.



A TOURIST views sacks of garbage along the street of the popular resort island of Boracay after Typhoon "Seniang" lashed Aklan province.

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Across the NATION

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BFAR says RP to supply 20 percent of fish demand

ALITAGTAG, BATANGAS—THE country expects to supply at least 20 percent of world market demand for freshwater aquarium fish and generate more livelihood opportunities for fishermen by 2010, according to Maria Theresa Mutia, chief in Taal town of the National Fisheries and Biological Center (NFBC) of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

To achieve this, the BFAR, in collaboration with the private sector, has already established in the Calabarzon Region a five-year ornamental fish development plan as Laguna and Taal lakes, two of the country's largest freshwater lakes, are located here.

Included in the plan is building an ornamental fish map that would zone ornamental fishes on respective areas.

For example, guppy fishes would be concentrated in Alitagtag, while egg layers such as goldfish will be sourced from Laguna.

Guppy is a small brightly colored tropical fish.

"Right now we (Philippines) don't export ornamental fish. The purpose of zoning is to be able to meet the market demand since a single area would be providing them, when needed," Mutia said.

According to her, worldwide demand for aquarium fish exports grows 14 percent annually.

Mutia disclosed that worldwide supply for ornamental fishes increased to \$186.4 million in 2003 from 1983's \$38.9 million.

Ornamental fishes, she said, are more profitable than food fishes.

For instance, 100 guppy heads cost P100 in the market compared to a kilogram of tilapia sold at P75-80.

Local koi fishes generate P200 for 10 heads while a trader would earn P1,000 for 10 fighting fish heads.

Food Agricultural Organization statistics said 90 percent of the freshwater fishes can be cultured, while other fishes are caught from the wild.

The country's vast freshwater lakes, ponds and springs are most favorable for large-scale culture and breeding of ornamental fishes unhindered by extreme cold seasons.

Despite the country's advantage in natural resources and labor, BFAR lamented that it only shares 3.8 percent of the total aquarium fish export supplied by Asian countries.

Singapore exports the highest at 25 percent.

Mutia said the agency aims to substitute the country's ornamental fish imports through exports.

In fact, she estimated that guppy's pond culture in a 1,000-sqm area using 4,000 breeders would generate for a farmer P298,000 net income annually.

With annual fixed and operational costs estimated at P115,700 and P102,000, payback period is 4.2 months, she said. *Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Fishermen's group asks Senate, House to probe China poaching

THE TOP OFFICIAL OF THE PAMBANSANG Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), a national group of militant fishermen, urged Senate and the House of Representatives to immediately conduct a joint or separate investigation on the reported cases of poaching by Chinese fishing vessels at the Tubbataha Reef Marine Park off Palawan.

"In the name of the Filipino people's sovereignty, national patrimony and environment, we oblige the Senate and the House committees on environment to pursue a full-blown, straightforward and aboveboard investigation to this year-round fishing escapades of Chinese poachers in Tubbataha Reef," Fernando Hicap, Pamalakaya chair, said in a statement furnished the INQUIRER.

Hicap made the call after envi-

ronment activist Lorenzo Tan, president of the World Wide Fund for Nature, and Sen. Jamby Madrigal, chair of the Senate committee on environment, accused the Department of Foreign Affairs of alleged intercession for the release of Chinese fishermen caught by the Philippine Navy last Dec. 21 while crossing the Unesco-declared World Heritage Site.

"We want the National Com-

mittee on Illegal Entrants and the entire DFA out of the picture to prevent obstruction of justice. This agency has been performing its role to the hilt as the dirty-work department of the government in charge of freeing poachers once caught fishing in Tubbataha by local authorities to save the immoral and unequal relation with China," he said.

Marine park rangers intercepted the Chinese vessel Hoi Wan manned by 30 crew members and loaded with 1,200 live Napoleon wrasse fish (locally known as "Mameng") and poaching gear.

The Chinese denied they were poachers and argued that they were merely passing through the park and that they bought the fish from the locals.

Tan, however, raised an alarm over reports that the DFA was in-

terceding for the release of the Chinese fishermen, a charge the DFA has denied.

Hicap said officials of Malacañang, the DFA and other government agencies allegedly working for the release of Chinese fishermen should be held liable for obstruction of justice and assault on national sovereignty.

"The conspiracy to undermine the sovereign rights of the people, the country's national patrimony and people's environment is one of the highest crimes against national interest. It is about time to unmask and charge the people behind this perpetual rape of protected marine diversity," he said.

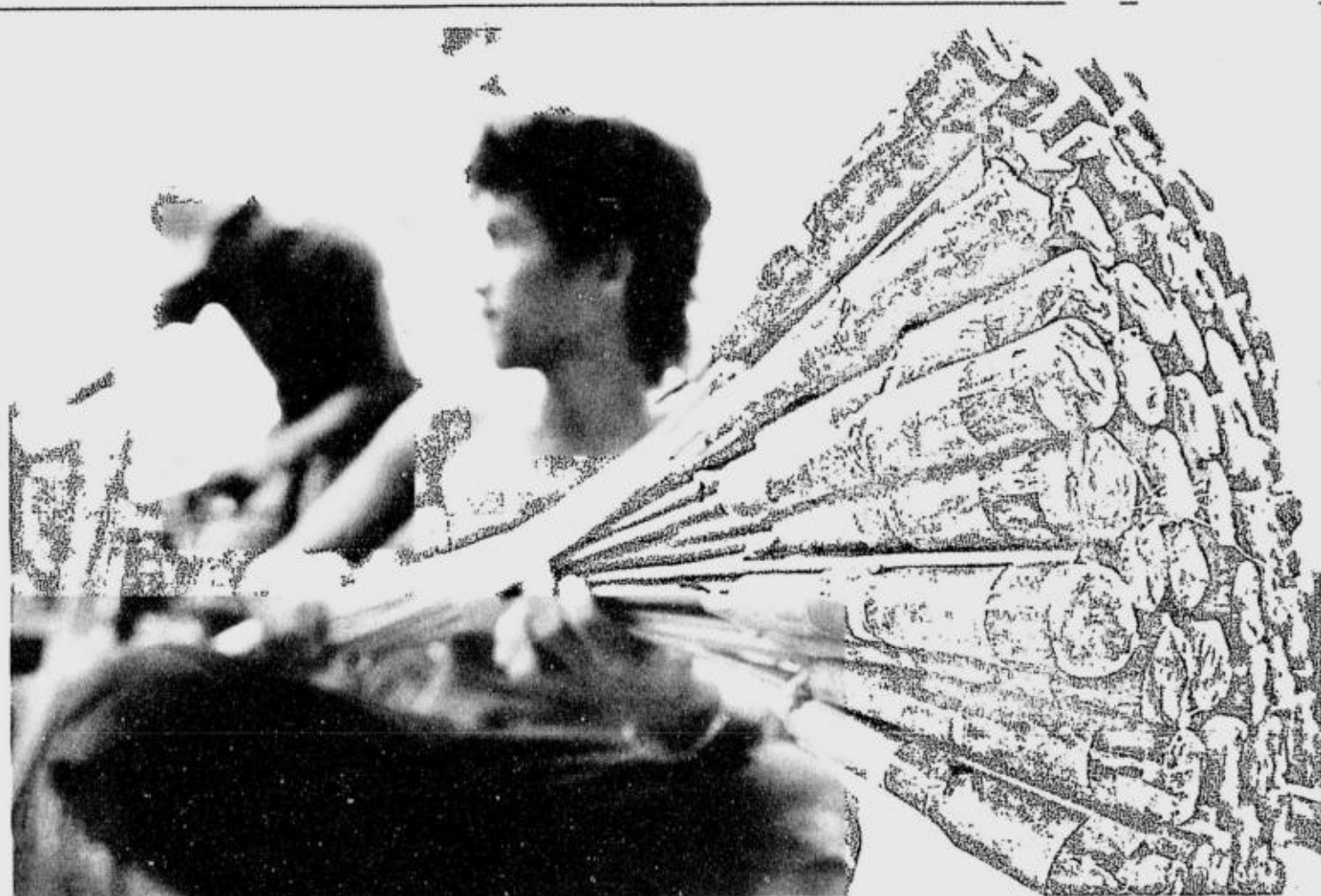
On top of the demand for an investigation, the Pamalakaya leader also pushed for the filing of criminal and other appropriate

charges against the owners and operators of Hoi Wan vessel.

Hicap said that while they supported the filing of criminal charges against invaders of the marine reef park, pressure should be exerted on the government to prevent China from assaulting the country's sovereign rights and environment.

The entry of commercial vessels into the Tubbataha Reef is banned by a provincial ordinance, while possession of "Mameng" is prohibited under the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species.

Hicap stressed that vigilance should be exercised at all times, given the country's experience over the past six years in relation to Chinese poachers caught by local authorities illegally fishing in the country. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*



READY FOR THE BANG
Despite repeated government warnings, many Filipinos are likely to greet the coming New Year with firecrackers, driving a firecracker manufacturing frenzy.

Kin cling to hopes fishermen still alive

DAGUPAN CITY—TWO WEEKS after huge waves sank several fishing boats in the South China Sea, relatives of missing fishermen from at least six coastal towns of Pangasinan and Zambales have not given up hope that their loved ones would return home alive.

Mayor Ruperto Martinez of Infanta, Pangasinan, where most of the fishermen came from, said residents in the town remain hopeful that their missing relatives "are just out there, somewhere, waiting to be sent home."

"After nine days of search and rescue operations, not one body has been recovered yet," Martinez said.

Task Force Infanta, which involved the Philippine Army, Navy, Coast Guard and the Philippine National Police, downgraded its operations from search and rescue to "monitoring."

Insp. Randy Maluyo, Infanta police chief, had taken over the task force.

Army Col. Gregory Cayetano, task force on-scene commander, had earlier told the INQUIRER that Navy ships and aircraft had scoured the sea lanes from Batanes to Palawan for possible survivors but did not find one.

"The search should now shift to the shorelines and we will leave this to the local police," Cayetano said. *Gabriel Cardinosa, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Rains displace 5,000 in Northern Samar towns

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE CONTINUOUS rain that hit the province this week resulted in the flooding in various areas in Northern Samar and displaced about 5,000 families in three towns.

The flooding came from three

rivers, Bunko River in Mondragon; Bantayan River in San Roque and Catarman River in Catarman, after three days of incessant rain, Northern Samar Gov. Raul Daza said.

Daza identified the affected towns were San Roque, Mondragon and the provincial capital, Catarman.

"The displaced families reside along the river banks, where these (rivers) overflowed due to the continuous heavy rains," Daza said when interviewed through his mobile phone.

The evacuation of the affected families started Friday morning, he said.

According to Daza, three of the barangays in San Roque were flooded, affecting about over a thousand families.

In Mondragon town, the flooding affected a similar number of families in two of its barangays. The flood hit six of Catarman's barangays where 3,000 families sought relocation.

Gloria wants Benguet veggie industry to be competitive

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo wants Benguet's vegetable industry to become stable and competitive because of its crucial role in the growth of the North Luzon Agribusiness Quadrangle (NLAQ), an agriculture official said here on Thursday.

Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary Salvador Salacup said the DA had prepared a "whole basket of government support" for the industry so farmers in the province will enjoy enhanced production of fresh, hygienic and quality vegetables.

"[Ms Arroyo] and [Agriculture] Secretary [Arthur] Yap are giving special attention to the vegetable industry of the province and the Cordillera to ensure the steady production of quality vegetables and enable farmers and stakeholders to earn more," Salacup told the INQUIRER.

Yap is the Cabinet secretary in charge of the NLAQ, one of the country's super regions.

Salacup said government support is composed of farm-to-market roads, irrigation systems, infrastructure, post-harvest facilities, credit systems and wider market access.

He said Ms Arroyo has a special concern for Benguet since she is well aware that the

province "supplies 60 to 65 percent of the vegetable demand of the metropolitan area and the whole urban beltway super region."

At the Benguet State University here on Thursday, Ms Arroyo and Yap gave local officials and farmers checks worth P15 million for several farm infrastructure projects.

The projects included a vegetable pre-packing and processing center near the vegetable trading post here, tramlines for Atok town and a pre-cooling facility for Buguias town.

Ms Arroyo also sent off 20 trucks that will deliver vegetables for the first time to a new vegetable market along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

Yap told Ms Arroyo that the government's support for the industry would cut down farmers' post-harvest losses and would increase their income.

The support, Salacup said, included giving the farmers the opportunity to access the government's market linkages for vegetable products, like the "Huwaring Palengke" and the "Barangay Food Terminal." *Delmar Cariño with a report from Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*



NEW YEAR RESOLUTION
PNP chief Director General Oscar Calderon seals the tip of security guard's shotgun during the inauguration of a police office in Baguio City.

YN RILLON



TO THE LAND OF THE WARLORDS: PO2 Isidro Martus of the Special Action Force holds a 50-cal. Barrett Sniper Rifle during send-off rites for Abra at its headquarters in Bicutan. The company-size force will be deployed to maintain peace and order as political tensions continue to rise following the murder of Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr.

REM ZAMORA



A HELPING HAND from daughter, lawyer Anne Valera at Camp Crame, after the governor's arrest on Commonwealth Ave., Quezon City. JOAN BONDOC



WHAT'S INSIDE THE CLOSET? PNP CIDG Supt. Benjie Delos Santos (middle), the Bersamin assassination task force spokesperson, wants to know from Rey Joy Pader (right), the driver of fashion model and "common friend" of Abra Governor Valera, Hergielyn Dimagiba during a search of her residence at 33 Habagat St., Teresita Heights, Fairview, Quezon City. Looking on is NBI NCR Director Atty. Ruel Lasala.

RODEL ROTONI

Head-banging snakes predict China quakes

From page A1

boring Taiwan.

The earthquake bureau in Nanjing, capital of the Guangxi autonomous region in southern China, had developed its system using a combination of natural instinct and modern technology, the China Daily newspaper said.

Experts at the bureau monitor snakes at local snake farms via video cameras linked to a broadband Internet connection.

The video feed runs 24 hours per day.

Most sensitive

"Of all the creatures on earth, snakes are perhaps the most sensitive to earthquakes," bureau director Jiang Weisong was quoted as saying.

Jiang said snakes, a popular restaurant dish in the south in the

winter, could sense an earthquake from 120 km away, three to five days before it happens. They respond by behaving strangely.

"When an earthquake is about to occur, snakes will move out of their nests, even in the cold of winter," Jiang was quoted as saying.

"If the earthquake is a big one, the snakes will even smash into walls while trying to escape."

China is struck by frequent earthquakes, with most hitting remote rural areas.

Two people were killed and 42 injured on Tuesday when three buildings collapsed in earthquakes that shook southern Taiwan.

While a tsunami warning came to nothing, the quake damaged undersea telecommunication cables, affecting users across Asia.

Reuters

Cops hold Valera; girl friend's home searched

From page A1

Valera said the grenade was "planted."

Police said the guns had no permits.

Task Force Bersamin, led by Supt. Benjamin de los Santos, and Ruel Lasala, National Bureau of Investigation NCR director, searched a bungalow at 33-B Habagat Street in Theresa Heights but found "nothing illegal or unusual."

The search was done without a warrant because the police could not immediately secure one from a court, De los Santos said.

The police asked occupants of the house, including Dimagiba's driver Rey Joy Pader to allow a voluntary search. They agreed and signed a handwritten consent form.

Divine intervention

Charrie Bersamin, the eldest daughter of Bersamin, called Valera's arrest a "divine intervention."

"God is so good. These are positive signs that the slaying of my father and his security [aide] will be solved soon," Charrie told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

She said the family believed that Valera was involved in the murder, citing police investigation.

Police recently arrested one of the suspects in the slaying of Bersamin and Adelfo Ortega. Former M/Sgt. Rufino Panday said Valera financed the operation to kill the lawmaker.

Valera has denied participation in the crime. He said he and Bersamin were political allies and were relatives.

Revoked permit to carry

Supt. Edwin Butacan, spokesperson of the Traffic Management Group (TMG), said

Valera was taken into custody for violating the "no plate, no travel" policy and not for the Bersamin killing.

Chief Insp. Joseph Orsos, head of the TMG legal division, said the permit to carry the guns had been revoked, as evidenced by a memo signed by former Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Arturo Lomibao.

"It will appear as illegal possession of firearms... He (Valera) was bringing his own evidence against him," Orsos told reporters.

He said the TMG legal division was "70-percent sure" it was filing charges of illegal possession of firearms against the Abra governor.

But Valera said all the guns were covered by the proper permits and that he got permission from the Abra provincial police commander to carry the guns outside of the province.

Because his security detail from the PNP was pulled out four months ago, Valera said he had to apply for permits to carry guns.

Valera blasted the police for arresting him. "I have a feeling that if they could not pin me down on the Bersamin case then maybe [they would pin me] on other charges," he said.

Relaxed

A relaxed-looking Valera, wearing a white polo shirt, jeans and blue driving shoes, told reporters some of his valuables like four cellphones, a Rolex watch, ring, pendant and P300,000 in cash, were missing.

Valera said the Suburban was "new" and the dealer was still getting the license plates. One of his lawyers, Lito Gahol, said the vehicle was bought around two weeks ago from a dealer on Shaw Boulevard.

But TMG officials noticed that

the vehicle bore production stickers dated 2005. Reporters also noticed on the windshield a sticker from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) issued in December 2005.

Butacan said the TMG received a report that Valera's Suburban was spotted along Commonwealth Avenue traveling without any license and plates and using a siren.

Three others arrested

Reports said Valera came from the Dimagiba house and was on his way to his home in Xavierville, Loyola Heights, also in Quezon City.

Butacan said a team was dispatched to flag down the vehicle. The team caught up with the vehicle on Commonwealth Avenue at 2:15 a.m. and told the driver to park in a gas station. The guns were found upon inspection of the vehicle.

Aside from Valera, taken into TMG custody were Pedro Castillo, the driver of the vehicle, and the governor's aides Oscar Abello and Leo Bello.

Butacan said that the "no plate, no travel" policy is in accordance with Republic Act No. 4136, or the Land Transportation Code.

The law requires the police to flag down and impound all vehicles traveling without plate numbers. It also requires the police to check the contents of the vehicles.

"We will verify if the vehicle is on the list of hot cars. If it is not included, then we will release it. Traveling with no plates is only an administrative violation. We will take out the siren. The firearms, we will have to verify them," Butacan said.

No charges yet

The penalty for traveling without a plate is from P500 to

P1,000. The use of sirens is subject to a fine and confiscation.

"This is all SOP (standard operating procedure). The occupants (of the vehicle) should be brought here (to TMG)," he said.

Valera told reporters he went to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) yesterday and was told that no charges had been filed against him for the Bersamin case.

Director Jesus Versoza, the CIDG head, told the INQUIRER that Valera appeared at the CIDG apparently thinking he was being arrested for the Bersamin killing.

"I told my men to book Governor Valera but turn him over to the TMG because it was the TMG that arrested him for traveling without any license plates," Versoza said.

But the CIDG chief said turning over Valera to the TMG did "not necessarily [mean] clearing him of the Bersamin killing. He must have thought he has been cleared in the investigation of the killing."

Still subject of investigation

Versoza said the Abra governor was still the subject of an investigation because of Panday's testimony.

Panday had told investigators Freddie Dupo, a suspect in the Bersamin killing, mentioned to him that Valera had taken out a contract to kill Bersamin for P5 million.

"It should be voluntary if he wants to subject himself to the investigation in connection with the Bersamin killing. If he wants to go, then that's OK. If he doesn't want to go, then that's his right," Versoza told the INQUIRER.

Valera said he contacted Gatdula two days ago and was due to appear yesterday at the office of the Quezon City police chief, Sr.

Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula to shed light on the Bersamin murder.

This was confirmed by both Gatdula and Versoza. "All actions of the Quezon City Police District in the Bersamin case are coordinated and cleared by the CIDG," Versoza said.

The CIDG, QCPD and the NBI have formed Task Force Bersamin to investigate the case, with Versoza as head.

On Wednesday, police went to Valera's house in Loyola Heights to deliver an invitation for him to appear before investigators and tell them what he knew of the Dec. 16 murder of Bersamin and his police escort.

The policemen, however, failed to find the governor in his house.

Courtesy

Valera called on the police to accord him the "proper courtesy" as a local government official.

"I would like to state here that even while the Chief PNP has stated that its just a simple traffic violation, as an official of the province of Abra, I should also be accorded due courtesy," Valera told reporters.

Valera reiterated he was being framed.

He denied knowing Panday but admitted to knowing another suspect, former La Paz Mayor Freddie Dupo. "I know Dupo because at one time he was vice mayor of La Paz. But more than a year ago, he went into hiding because he was ambushed," he said.

He noted that Panday's statements were "double hearsay."

The governor called on the police to investigate the Bersamin killing thoroughly and explore other angles besides politics.

He said he was "not running away" from the police. "My

lawyers and I are ready (to face Gatdula). But I had to call them (lawyers) here because of this incident. As I have said, the truth shall set us free."

Valera added: "I am not running from anyone and I want to face whatever charges they have against me provided I am accorded my constitutional rights and due process."

"I am confident my name will be cleared," he said.

Chief Supt. Errol Pan, chief of the TMG, said the group had received complaints that the Suburban was traveling around Metro Manila since Dec. 20.

Third party

In Baguio City, Director General Oscar Calderon, the PNP chief, said the police might not be able to detain Valera because he was not charged with the murder of Bersamin.

At a press conference, Calderon said Valera himself might need police protection from a "third party" who may retaliate.

"Will it come from the Bersamin family? I don't think that will happen. But we are concerned about the safety of the governor. Definitely there will be a third party who will take advantage of the situation," he said.

Calderon is checking on security measures in Baguio where President Macapagal-Arroyo and members of the First Family are spending their holidays.

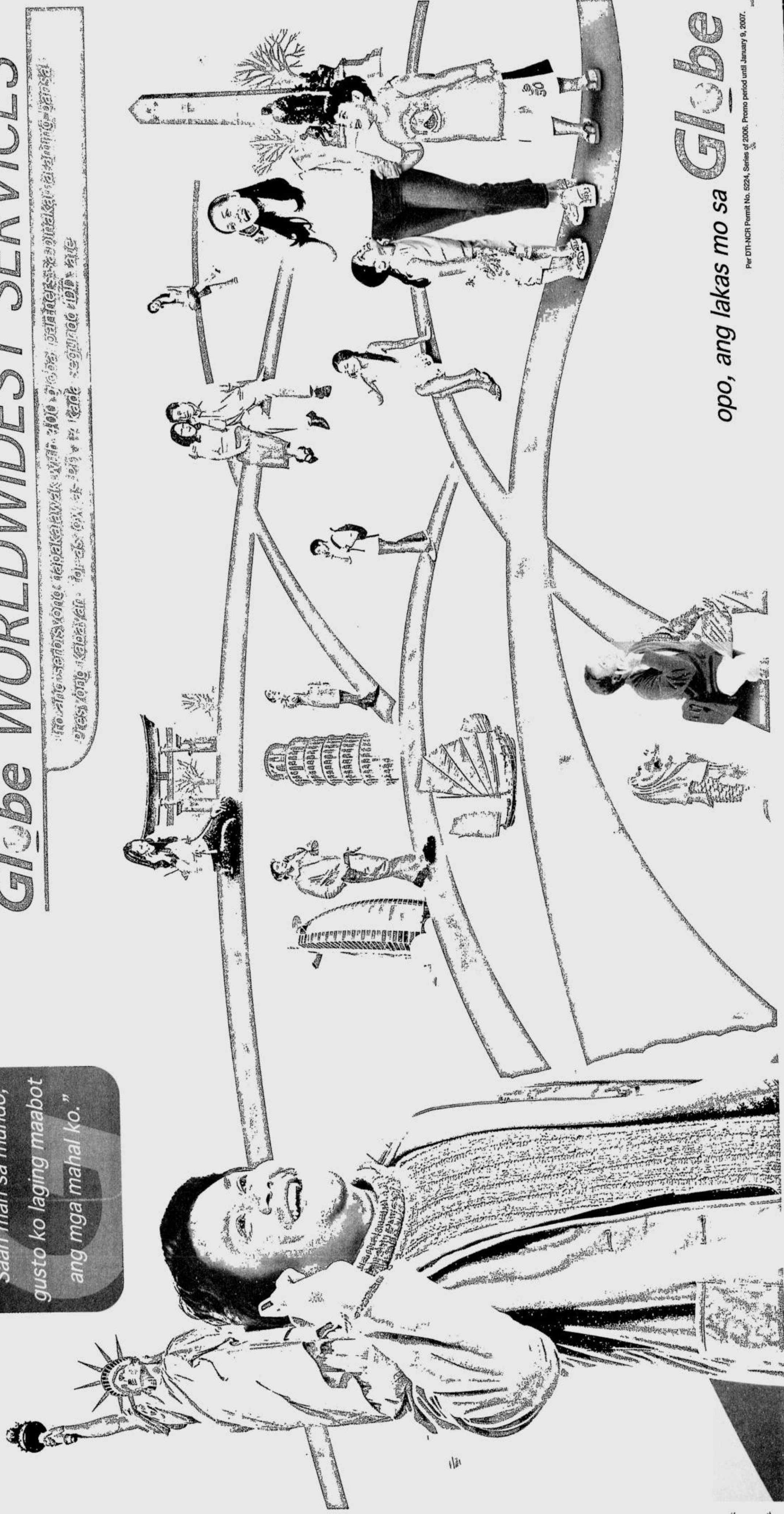
He said the police were trying to preempt in Abra violent reactions to Bersamin's murder. The province has become volatile now that attention has been given to unsolved political killings in the province, according to Calderon. *With reports from and Vincent Cabreza and Leoncio Balbin Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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Freeze order on bank accounts

Suspected shabu mart operator linked to money laundering

By Armand N. Nocom

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS ORDERED the Equitable PCI Bank and Planters Development Bank in Pasig City to freeze bank accounts of suspected shabu market operator Amin Imam Boratong allegedly kept in the name of a bank executive.

The court granted the petition of the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) for the issuance of a 20-day freeze order against the accounts of Godofredo A. Medenilla, bank manager of EPCIB-Dr. Sixto Avenue, Capasigan Branch, Pasig City, who was allegedly hired by Bora-

tong to launder drug money. The appellate court said Boratong's alleged money laundering activities were related to drug trafficking.

The freeze order, meant to stop the withdrawal of the money in question, covers Medenilla's bank accounts at EPCIB Pasig and four accounts at Planters Development Bank believed to hold proceeds from Boratong's illegal activities.

"Considering that the drug trafficking activities of the group of Amin Imam Boratong is an 'unlawful activity' listed under the Anti-Money Laundering Act; that there is reasonable ground to believe

that the bank accounts and investments of Godofredo A. Medenilla are related to the drug trafficking activities of Amin Imam Boratong's group; and that, unless stayed, advanced computer technology of the electronic banking system would make it possible for Godofredo A. Medenilla to dissipate the subject bank accounts in a matter of seconds, we order the issuance of a freeze order, effective immediately, for a period of 20 days against the bank accounts or investments, and their related web of accounts, in the name of Godofredo A. Medenilla," said the court resolution.

The Anti-Money Laundering Act grants the court authority to issue a 20-day freeze order against monetary instruments or properties related to unlawful activity.

Executives of the two banks were also ordered to submit, within 24 hours from receipt of the order, a report detailing all relevant information surrounding the subject bank accounts, including the nature of the monetary instrument or property; information on the related web of accounts pertaining to the monetary instrument or property; and an explanation as to the ground for identifying the relat-



NBI - RAID
DETAINEE

AMIN Imam Boratong

EDWIN BACASMAS

ed web of accounts. Samer Maniri Palao, one of the witnesses, claimed Boratong had bank accounts in an Equitable PCI Bank branch in Pasay, and had given P50,000 to the bank manager, identified later as Medenilla, for "assistance."

'Boga' not a safe alternative to firecrackers, say cops

By Tarra V. Quismundo, Tina G. Santos, Jocelyn R. Uy, and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE HUGELY POPULAR BOGA MAY not be a safer alternative to firecrackers after all.

With just two sprays of denatured alcohol, it can shoot a tin can up to 10 meters away, force a projectile up to five layers of heavy cardboard and spark fire in plastic.

Boga is an improvised cannon made of PVC (polyvinyl chloride) pipe and fed with alcohol. Sold on the streets for P500-800 depending on size, the noisemaker has become a favored alternative to firecrackers.

An experiment conducted yesterday by the Makati Police Station showed that the improvised cannons, touted as a better alternative to firecrackers, can also cause injury and damage to property.

Meanwhile, Manila policemen have started confiscating boga because of reports that it caused several injuries since the holiday revelry began. A Manila health official disclosed earlier that it was responsible for eight of 24 firecracker-related injuries reported in the city Dec. 1-26.

The National Capital Region Police Office directed Metro Manila law enforcers to confiscate such devices even as the Department of Health sought a ban on the improvised cannons.

Makati police chief Supt. Gilbert Cruz said their experiment showed the boga was very damaging and could cause burn and injury.

"Our experiment was meant to check the extent of damage the boga could cause if a projectile was launched from



MAKATI Police Chief Gilbert Cruz (left) and Mayor Jejomar Binay test improvised bazookas (boga) confiscated in the city at the Makati Garden and Park grounds yesterday.

EDWIN BACASMAS

it. It could pierce through thick cardboard, which means if it hits a person, it could definitely break the skin or wound of a person," Cruz told reporters.

Held at the grounds of the Makati Park and Garden, yesterday's experiment was conducted on orders of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, who expressed concern over the prevalence of boga in Makati.

Using improvised cannons confiscated the day before, police showed the damage it caused when it ejected a projectile like a tin can. "It is very dangerous because you could put shrapnel or broken glass inside a tin can," Binay said.

Members of the station's Special Weapons and Tactics team also checked how powerful the cannon would be if ignited using gasoline, lighter fluid or denatured alcohol. They found that boga worked fastest and loudest with alcohol.

"Right now, we have no law yet, but

BOGA/A18

Better safe than sorry, advises grieving father

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE FATHER OF A 10-YEAR-OLD GIRL who died in a carnival ride accident in Marikina City is asking local government units to inspect amusement park facilities thoroughly before granting permits to its operators.

"The local governments should inspect the rides first before they allow the public to board," Greg Picandal said. "If possible, there should also be regular tests even during the days when the carnivals are already operational," he added.

Picandal's daughter Katherine will be buried at the Loyola Memorial Park this morning. Her sister Kimberly, who survived the accident on Monday, remained under observation in the hospital. Picandal expressed gratitude to the Marikina City government, whom he said was quick in providing help to his family.

Four scramble ride carts operating in a small carnival in Barangay Jesus Dela Peña crashed to the ground after the metal rotator holding the carts broke on Monday afternoon. Documents showed the owner of the carnival had secured permits from the city health department, the barangay office and the parks and recreation office of the City Hall as early as last month.

The city fire station has already completed its investigation report, but the city engineering office has not yet submitted any four days after the accident.

Quezon City treasurer's office open on weekends for taxpayers

By DJ Yap

AS EXPECTED, THE TAXMAN OF QUEZON City is welcoming the New Year on a busy note.

Starting Jan. 1, the city treasurer's office will be open even on week-

ends—with no lunch breaks—to accommodate taxpayers rushing to settle their obligations with the city.

City treasurer Victor Endriga announced yesterday that his office would be open on Saturdays and Sundays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. without breaks, in antici-

pation of a heavy turnout of taxpayers.

The first two weeks are expected to be busy in the treasury office as people line up to pay their business or real property taxes to avoid paying late payment penalties before the Jan. 20 deadline.

The city government is imposing a

25-percent surcharge on top of a 2 percent monthly interest rate for late payments.

Endriga urged taxpayers, especially those who need to renew their business licenses, to take advantage of the extended working days and to avoid

the last-hour rush.

Last year, the Quezon City government collected more than P150 million in tax payments in the first two weeks of 2006, representing an increase of almost 80 percent from the previous year.

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ASPAC FOR GAWAD KALINGA

Amrop Hever country managers in the Asia-Pacific recently met in Manila to recognize Gawad Kalinga as an effective corporate social responsibility program. GK head Tony Meloto (middle, in white) is shown with Amrop Hever Philippines managing director Jun Gil (left) and Chair Finn Rants.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'Saudi husband has links with Bin Laden'

By Leila B. Salaverria

A FORMER BEAUTY TITLE holder has asked the Bureau of Immigration to deport her estranged Saudi Arabian husband for his alleged ties to al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and for a string of cases from child custody to estafa.

Sabrina Artadi, former Miss Philippines-International, said her Saudi businessman Fouzi Ali Bondagiy was an undesirable alien.

She alleged he failed to give financial support to their two children and was harassing them. Bondagiy, through his lawyer, denied Artadi's charges and described her allegations linking him to Bin Laden as "untrue, unfounded, self-serving, hearsay and most importantly, without basis." Bin Laden was tagged as the mastermind behind the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks in the United States.

Bondagiy said the charges against him should not be enter-

tained because they were vague, hearsay and intended to facilitate false claims for to get money and support.

Artadi earlier asked the BI to deport Bondagiy for failing to secure an alien employment permit from the labor department. The BI initially ordered the Saudi national's expulsion but, following an appeal, amended its decision and fined him instead.

In her complaint, Artadi alleged Bondagiy met with Bin Laden in the Philippines some-

time in 1990. She said Bondagiy was involved with the Muslim World League, a Saudi charity organization which she said was being sued by victims of the 2001 attacks. She said the group held office at the Heart Tower Building, Valero Street, Makati City.

"I was asked to host a dinner for the its members in apartment 20b Twin Towers Condominium Philippines, sometime in 1990, and one of the guests was Bin Laden," she told the BI.

METROBRIEFS

3 dead in QC fire

A 54-YEAR-old woman and her two children died in a three-hour blaze that struck their house in an upscale neighborhood in Quezon City on Thursday night. Killed were Cristina Yao and her children Howell, 18, and Pee-wee, 11, who were trapped inside the bathroom on the second floor of their house at 10 Manansala St., Corinthian Gardens, fire officials said. The fire started in the living room of the two-story house at 9:49 p.m., quickly spreading to the rest of the house, according to a report by arson investigator F03 Rosendo Cabillan. Cristina, the wife of businessman Henry Yao, and their son and daughter were reportedly locked inside, unable to escape because the windows had grills. Faulty wiring could have caused the fire, a desk officer in the Quezon City fire department said.

DJ Yap

Robbery foiled

A MAN pretending to be a customer tried to rob a donut shop in Makati City early yesterday morning. Alert tricycle drivers parked outside the store, however, sensed something wrong and sprung into action, prompting the man to flee. But police and barangay officials caught up shortly with Richard Memes inside a motel in Barangay Guadalupe Nuevo. Investigators said Memes would be charged with attempted robbery.

Tarra V. Quismundo

Business deal could be behind ex-cop's slay

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF Investigation (NBI) is looking into the possibility that a business deal "gone sour" could have triggered the killing of a former Manila policeman.

NBI National Capital Region (NCR) chief Ruel Lasala said they were summoning victim Edgardo Castro's former business partner, a foreign national who owned a bar in Pasay City.

"We would issue a subpoena to Castro's former business associate to shed light on the case," Lasala said in an interview yesterday.

Initial information showed that Castro managed the bar with the foreigner, his friend of 20 years. However, Castro was "eased out of the business," Lasala said.

Castro later filed charges against the foreigner before the Bureau of Immigration seeking his deportation. "This is one of the angles we are considering," the NBI-NCR chief said.

An NBI investigation disclosed that Castro was arguing with the first suspect at the parking lot of the Harrison Plaza mall in Malate, Manila prior to the shooting on Dec. 22.

Witnesses told investigators that Armando Landar, Castro's alleged companion, tried to mediate.

Suddenly, the second suspect shot Castro and Landar in the head. Castro died on the spot. Landar was later declared dead on arrival at the Ospital ng Maynila.

Witnesses saw the first suspect shoot Castro in the back before fleeing with his companion on board a sedan-type vehicle.

In an earlier interview, NBI Deputy Director for Regional Operations (ROS) Reynaldo Esmeralda said he might have seen the gunman before the incident while he was having lunch at the coffee shop at the nearby Century Park Hotel.

The NBI official said he saw a man wearing an orange baseball cap, who seemed to be looking for someone in the smoking area.

Esmeralda said Castro usually sat in the smoking area when he met with colleagues.

The NBI official has requested copies of the hotel's close-circuit television tapes that could have footage of the suspect on video.

Esmeralda said they would ask the witnesses to look at the videos.



LITTLE GIRL BLUE

A street kid waits for her mother out looking for a hearty lunch for both of them, hopefully, not in vain.

MELVIN GASCON

'Boga' not a safe alternative...

From page A17

hopefully results of this experiment could be used to draft a city ordinance banning these devices. But we have been directed to confiscate all improvised cannons around Makati," Cruz said.

Meanwhile, Senior Supt. Danilo Abarzosa, acting director of the Manila Police District, said they had confiscated at least 100 boga since Thursday.

"We're now strictly enforcing the ban on boga upon the directive of the National Capital Region Police Office and Mayor Lito Atienza," he said.

Abarzosa said his men would continue making the rounds of city streets to ensure that nobody used boga to welcome the New Year.

"Last year there were no reported injuries from boga, but since it's the 'in' thing now among the youth, we have quite a number of cases this year," said Dr. Virgilio Martin, disaster coordinator of the Manila Health Office, adding that the fig-

ure could go up if kids were not warned about it.

In southern Metro Manila, 200 volunteers joined the police keeping the improvised bazooka off the streets.

Ronald Gaon, national chair of the Philippine National Police-Civilian Volunteers Organization (CVO), said they will be making the rounds of critical areas in the southern metropolis on board motorcycles provided by the Southern Police District to confiscate boga and other illegal firecrackers starting today.

SPD Director Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales told reporters that the 200 CVOs have been authorized to arrest people using the banned improvised cannon.

"We will be bringing along megaphones to make our message clear by discouraging people from burning tires, firing their guns and using boga," Gaon told the INQUIRER.

At least 30 improvised cannons, with prices ranging from P200 to P1,000, were destroyed by Supt. Ronald Estilles, Parañaque police

chief, before Rosales at the SPD Headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City yesterday.

As authorities reminded the public against indiscriminate firing, the Taguig police yesterday reported that a stray bullet missed Nitz Jordan, head of the city's Social Welfare Development on Wednesday morning.

Police in the eastern Metro have also confiscated more than 100 pieces of the dreaded boga.

Police district director Chief Supt. Luizo Ticman said they also confiscated hundreds of thousands worth of illegal firecrackers.

He said 44 pieces of boga were seized in Mandaluyong City, 24 in Pasig City, 20 in Marikina City, and 17 in San Juan.

"This improvised cannon poses a danger to life and limb. It is potentially harmful. We are prohibiting its use," Ticman said.

Thirty of the 173 persons reported hurt between December 21-27 were boga users, according to the Department of Health.

Two can play the game just as well

EVERY year, days before New Year's Eve, the nozzle of policemen's pistols and rifles are taped to prevent them from firing indiscriminately to greet the coming year.

The symbolic gesture is a lot of dung. Cops fire their guns during New Year's Eve with or without the tape on the nozzles of their guns. So of what use is that gesture?

Why don't the higher-ups just tell the cops about the dire consequences of indiscriminate firing, such as dismissal from the service?

Once it's proven that a cop fired his gun on New Year's Eve, he should be unceremoniously booted out of the service. No questions asked. Just give him his walking papers.

That way, discipline will be restored in the Philippine National Police (PNP). The fear factor—the fear of losing his job—makes a cop toe the line.

As it is, policemen are not afraid to violate all rules in the book. Why? Because he's protected by civil service rules that provide that he should be given "due process" when he's accused of wrongdoing. While the case against him is being heard, the cop can still go about his business.

The same privilege is not enjoyed by a military man who, when he's facing charges in a military court, is jailed or confined to quarters. In the case of a military man with a minor rank, he can be removed from the ser-

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



who see their policemen toeing the line will obey the rules.

But how can you expect your ordinary cop to obey the law when he sees high government officials violating the same law? Like cheating in an election, or stealing P730 million from the government?

President Macapagal-Arroyo's endorsement of her chief of staff, Michael Defensor, as a senatorial candidate is like getting the kiss of death.

If elections are to be held tomorrow, Defensor would suffer a humiliating loss.

It's regrettable that a young man with a very bright future has been destroyed by his affiliation with the second most hated Chief Executive of this country, the first being Marcos.

Nothing will come out of the civil suit against First Gentleman Mike Arroyo that was filed the other day by about 40 journalists he has charged with libel.

But then, it has sent a message to Malacañang that reporters, editors and columnists can play Mr. Arroyo's kind of game. We will use the courts, as he has, to get back at him.

The gesture also sent the message to our courts that we still have trust in our judiciary even if some of the prosecutors and judges are held by the nose by Malacañang.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Saddam bids family farewell in prison

BAGHDAD—SADDAM HUSSEIN bade two half brothers farewell on Thursday in a rare prison meeting as he awaits execution, a lawyer said, but US and Iraqi officials gave conflicting accounts of whether he would hang within days.

A senior Bush administration official said the ousted president could go to the gallows as soon as Saturday.

But Iraqi officials backed away

from suggestions they would definitely hang him within a month and a cabinet minister told Reuters a week-long religious holiday would stall any execution.

"He was in very high spirits and clearly readying himself," Badie Aref, a defense lawyer, told Reuters after the 69-year-old former leader met half-brothers Watban and Sabawi, who are also both held at the US army's Camp Cropper near Baghdad airport.

"He told them he was happy he would meet his death at the hands of his enemies and be a martyr, not just languish in jail."

"He...gave them letters to his family in anticipation."

The novelty of the US-sponsored process by which Saddam and his third half-brother Barzan, along with another senior member of the Baath party, were condemned on Nov. 5 has left considerable room for wrangling over

the timing of any execution among rival factions and between Washington and Baghdad.

Battling to stave off all-out sectarian civil war, Shiite Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki had said he wanted Saddam hanged this year for the killings, torture and other crimes against the Shiite population of the town of Dujail.

But some of Saddam's fellow Sunnis have warned this could reinforce their community's alien-

ation and many ethnic Kurds want Saddam first convicted of genocide against them.

Iraq's Saddam-era penal code bars executions on religious holidays. Eid al-Adha, coinciding with the haj pilgrimage to Mecca, runs from Friday until work resumes on Jan. 7.

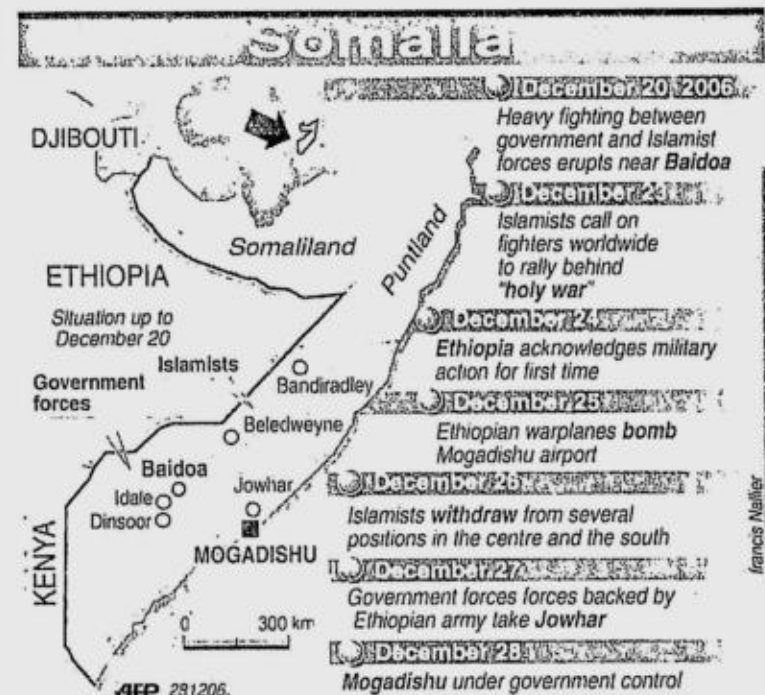
Nonetheless, the US official in the United States said: "I've heard that it's going to be a couple more days, probably."

Reuters



SADDAM

AFP



Somalia set to declare martial law

MOGADISHU—SOMALI PRIME Minister Ali Mohamad Gedi said parliament would declare a period of martial law to maintain control of the country after Ethiopian and government troops wrested the capital from rival Islamists.

The fall of Mogadishu came after a 10-day offensive by government and allied forces to reclaim much of the territory seized by the Somalia Islamic Courts Council (SICC) since June.

While Gedi on Thursday celebrated a triumphant return to his home village outside Mogadishu for the first time since 2002, he acknowledged the chaotic country was far from stable.

"This country has experienced

anarchy, and in order to restore security, we need a strong hand, especially with freelance militias," he said of the country which has not had an effective government since the 1991 ouster of a dictator.

Gedi told reporters in Mundul Sharey, a dusty village some 40 km southwest of Mogadishu, parliament would declare martial law on Saturday for a period of three months.

The flight of the Islamists was a dramatic turnaround in the Horn of Africa nation after they had spread across the south imposing sharia rule and confined the interim government to its base in Baidoa until less than two weeks ago.

Terrified of yet more violence in a city that has become a byword

for chaos, some Mogadishu residents took to the streets to cheer government troops, while others hid. Some SICC fighters ditched their uniforms to avoid reprisals.

Government spokesperson Abdirahman Dinari said the Islamists had fled to the southern port city of Kismayu and that the administration now controlled 95 percent of Somalia.

But analysts said a government victory was in no way certain and that the conflict could be about to take another turn.

"I think we're at a crossroads right now," said Ken Menkhaus, Horn of Africa specialist at Davidson College in Charlotte, North Carolina.

He said the government could

exploit splits within the SICC and attract some members to join a unity government.

"But alternatively this could be the beginning of a new kind of war," Menkhaus said.

"One in which the Islamists are going to fight their kind of war...an asymmetrical war involving a combination of hit-and-run guerrilla attacks, car bombings, assassinations, and possibly even selected acts of terrorism on other parts of East Africa."

With Eritrea accused of backing the Islamists, many feared the conflict could engulf the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia, like the United States, says the Islamists are supported by al Qaeda.

Reuters

Passengers, crew foil would-be Russian hijacker

PRAGUE—CREW MEMBERS and passengers overpowered a Russian man who tried to hijack an Aeroflot plane on Thursday and the aircraft safely made an emergency landing in Prague, airline officials said.

"One of the passengers on board

the Moscow-Geneva flight said he had an explosive device and ordered (the crew) to change course," Lev Koshlyakov, deputy general director of the Russian airline, told Reuters.

"There are reasons to believe that this was an act of hooliganism," he added.

The Airbus A-320, on a charter flight from Moscow to Geneva, made an unplanned landing in the Czech capital after the pilot declared an emergency while the man tried to force his way into the flight deck.

Passengers and crew members overpowered the man and handed

him over to Czech police who were questioning him, officials said.

"A drunk person was on board. He provoked a brawl with passengers, threatened to damage the plane and demanded that it change the course," Itar-Tass news agency quoted Viktor

Parkhimovich, an Aeroflot representative in Prague, as saying.

Vladislav Husak, the head of the Czech police force, told reporters there was a suspicion the man was drunk but added police were waiting for results of medical tests.

Reuters

WORLD BRIEFS

Rio violence

RIO DE JANEIRO—Rio de Janeiro will redouble police patrols for its spectacular New Year's celebrations after gangs attacked buses and police posts on Thursday in a wave of violence that killed at least 18 people. Seven people were burned to death on a bus and nearly two dozen were wounded, said Rio state public security secretary Roberto Precioso, who blamed drug gangs and their jailed kingpins for 12 attacks across the oceanside city. Police killed seven suspected drug dealers and arrested three. Two police officers were killed in the violence, which started after midnight. Two buses were torched in the afternoon despite strong policing. The attacks came as Rio prepared for its massive New Year's Eve beach party, which draws huge crowds of tourists.

Reuters

Sea mishap

ZURICH—At least 17 people were killed and 140 missing after two boats packed with people fleeing Somalia capsized off the coast of Yemen, the UN refugee agency said on Thursday. The incident occurred late on Wednesday after Yemeni security forces opened fire on smugglers trying to bring more than 500 people into the country across the Gulf of Aden to a remote stretch of Yemen's coastline. Four boats were involved in the smuggling operation, the UNHCR said. Two boats had off-loaded their passengers and were then fired on by Yemeni security forces. One boat capsized after being thrown off balanced by agitated passengers, trapping several people under it.

Reuters

Thaksin probe

BANGKOK—Thailand's army-installed government and the junta have agreed that ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra could return to the kingdom after investigations on him are finished, an official said Friday. Military-backed Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont met with junta leader General Sonthi Boonyaratglin on Wednesday to discuss the ousted premier's request to return to Bangkok, a government official told AFP on condition of anonymity. "Surayud and General Sonthi agreed that Thaksin could return after the results of investigations related to him become clear in one or two months," the official said.

AFP

Ferry capsizes

JAKARTA—A passenger ferry capsized in rough waters off the coast of Sumatra, leaving one dead and 36 missing, officials said Friday. The Tri Star I was believed to have been carrying 58 crew and passengers when it sank Thursday night in an estuary of the Musi River, about 450 km northwest of the capital, Jakarta, said Saidini Ali, the chief provincial transportation official. Ali said 21 people were rescued after the 288-ton ferry capsized on its way from the South Sumatran capital of Palembang to Muntok, a nearby island in the neighboring Bangka-Belitung province. The cause of the accident was not immediately clear.

AP

Ford cites long friendship as reason for Nixon's pardon

WASHINGTON—FORMER PRESIDENT Gerald R. Ford acknowledged in an interview last year that his long personal friendship with Richard Nixon did indeed play a role in his decision to pardon the disgraced former president, The Washington Post reported.

"I looked upon him as my personal friend. And I always treasured our relationship. And I had no hesitation about granting the pardon, because I felt that we had this relationship and that I didn't want to see my real friend have the stigma," Ford told Post reporter Bob Woodward, according to a story in the paper Thursday night.

Ford's remarks, which he asked not be released until his death, add to the rationale for pardoning Nixon a month after he resigned as president in 1974. Ford had claimed that he issued the pardon to allow the nation to move past Watergate and begin a time of healing, not for personal reasons.

Nixon and Ford had been acquainted since the late 1940s, but the depth of their friendship was not widely known. Nixon confided in Ford and sought his help during the Watergate crisis when

Ford was House minority leader, the Post reported.

"I think that Nixon felt I was about the only person he could really trust on the Hill," Ford told Woodward. He also called himself Nixon's "only real friend."

In Palm Desert, California, six days of mourning for Ford begin Friday with a simple, private prayer service at his parish church.

Former first lady Betty Ford, 88, and her four grown children were to gather at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church to receive his casket from a military honor guard at midday.

A private visitation for close friends was to follow the family service before the start of a public viewing expected to draw thousands of people to the desert resort town 175 km east of Los Angeles.

Ms Ford will then accompany her husband's body across the nation for a series of ceremonies that includes two funeral services in Washington, DC, and another in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he will be entombed Wednesday.

The Fords began worshipping at St. Margaret's a year after retir-

ing to Rancho Mirage.

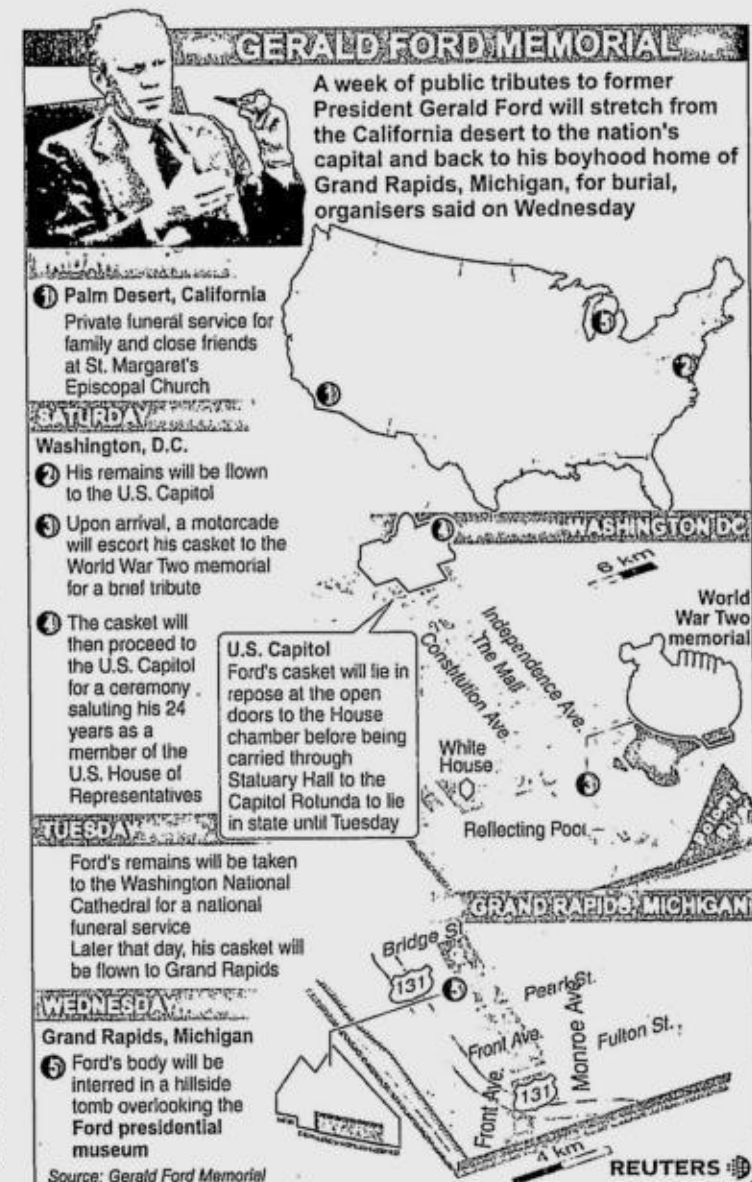
The ceremony prompted tight security at the church, with the entire campus locked down for Secret Service sweeps and surrounding residential streets blocked off. It was crafted with nods to Ford's Navy service, with a sailor deputized to fly the presidential seal from an ebony staff as Ford's casket is taken from the hearse.

People hoping to pay their respects to the United States' 38th president during the public repose will be shuttled to the church from a tennis center several miles away, and will not be allowed to bring personal items including cameras, cell phones, purses or flowers with them.

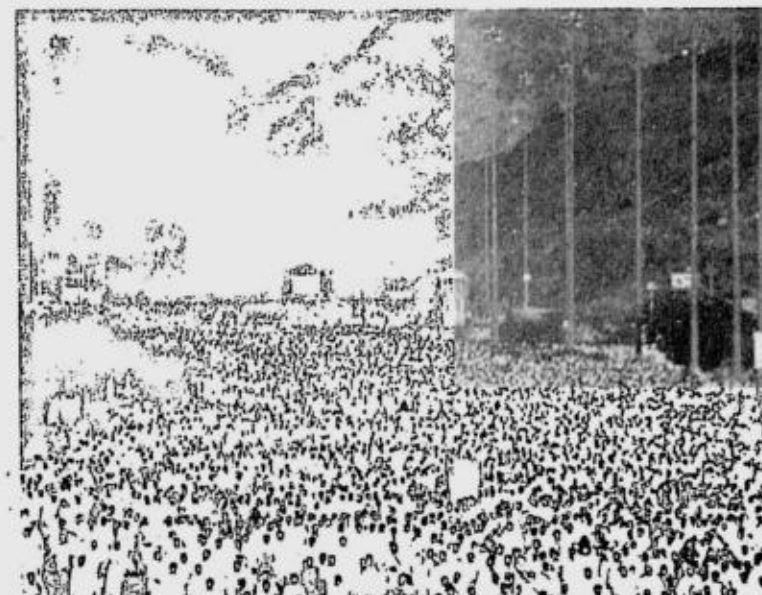
After arriving at Andrews Air Force Base on Saturday, the coffin will be escorted to the Capitol in a funeral procession, then carried up the steps of the East Front of the House by a military team.

It will then lie in repose in front of the House chamber and be carried into the Rotunda for a ceremony and public viewing before being moved to the National Cathedral on Tuesday for funeral services there.

AP



Muslim pilgrims begin haj amid tight security



MUSLIM pilgrims performing the haj arrive Dec. 29 on the plain of Arafat, near Mecca, where Prophet Mohammad gave his farewell sermon 14 centuries ago.

Reuters

MECCA, SAUDI ARABIA—Around two million Muslim faithful were heading Thursday from Mecca to the valley of Mina as the annual haj pilgrimage got under way in Saudi Arabia amid heavy security.

Draped in white robes, the pilgrims walked or boarded buses to Mina, five kilometers east of the holy city of Mecca, to begin tracing the journey made by Prophet Mohammed more than 1,400 years ago.

"Everything is proceeding according to plan," Saudi interior ministry spokesperson General Mansur al-Turki said.

Turki said the final number of pilgrims would not be known until the haj climaxes on Friday, when the faithful move to Mount Arafat where they will spend the

day praying and asking for God's forgiveness at the summit, in a symbolic waiting for the last judgment.

More than 1.6 million people from across the world have arrived in Saudi Arabia, and their numbers have been swelled by Saudis and other Muslim residents in the country to above two million.

Over two thirds of the pilgrims are expected to spend the day known as "Yawm al-Tarwiya" at Mina, an optional ritual, while others will head straight to Mount Arafat on Friday, Turki said.

Pilgrims spend the day in prayers and meditation in Mina, sleeping at night in tents before heading further south to Mount Arafat.

Thousands of Saudi security

forces have been deployed along the routes to be used by the pilgrims and official media said security and health authorities are mobilized to ensure the safety of the faithful during often risky rituals, with dozens of field hospitals and clinics set up in the area.

The last haj in January was marred by a deadly stampede which killed 364 people in Mina during a ritual which involves casting stones at pillars representing Satan.

A similar stampede in 2004 saw 251 people trampled to death during the stoning ceremony.

Both tragedies occurred at the entrance to the Jamarat bridge, from where pilgrims cast their stones at three pillars that are supposed to symbolize the powers of evil.

AFP

Mesa-ligayang PASKO!

mula sa *Globe* Kabalik

Tuloy-tuloy ang Merryunions ngayong Pasko.

Mula sa pagdating ng inyong mga kamag-anak galing abroad at hanggang sa muling pag-alis, nandito ang Globe, ang Kabalik ng pamilyang Pinoy. Si PGMA mismo at mga celebrity ang kasama niyo sa pagsundo sa mga umuwing kamag-anak sa Christmas Kabalik Salubong sa NAIA. Sa Globe at Duty Free Christmas Shopping Rush lalong naging exciting ang pamimili ng pamilya dahil sa naglalakihang papremyo tulad ng house and lot, dalawang Isuzu Crosswind

at iba pa. At dahil ang lakas niyo sa Globe, ang buong bansa ay nagkaroon ng matinding katuwaan sa Kabalik OWWA Family Days na ginanap sa Enchanted Kingdom, Leyte, Davao, Maguindanao, Oriental Mindoro, Koronadal, Ilo-ilo, Pangasinan, Zamboanga, Agusan del Sur at iba pa. At para sa inyong karagdagang kaalamang pangkabuhayan, hinatid ng Globe kasama ang Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship ang Go Negosyo Livelihood Fair sa Market! Market!



WELCOME HOME KABALIKAT! Khamusta niha PGMA, OWWA Admin. Nito Roque at DOLE Usec. Danilo Cruz ang mga Pinoy na umuwi para sa Pasko sa NAIA terminal.



ANGHEL DINALA NG GLOBE SA LUPA! Dahil ang lakas niyo sa Globe, nakasama si Angelica Panganiban sa pagsundo sa mga Pinoy na umuwi para sa Pasko.



SMILE MO KITA KO! Sa ngiti lang ni Patrick Garcia at ng mga kamag-anak na sumundo sa kanila talagang lumiwanag ang araw ng lahat ng mga umuwing OFW sa Christmas Kabalik Salubong.



MAKULAY NA PASKO KABALIKAT. Nagdala ng kulay si Jolina sa NAIA nang sumama ang artista sa Christmas Kabalik Salubong.



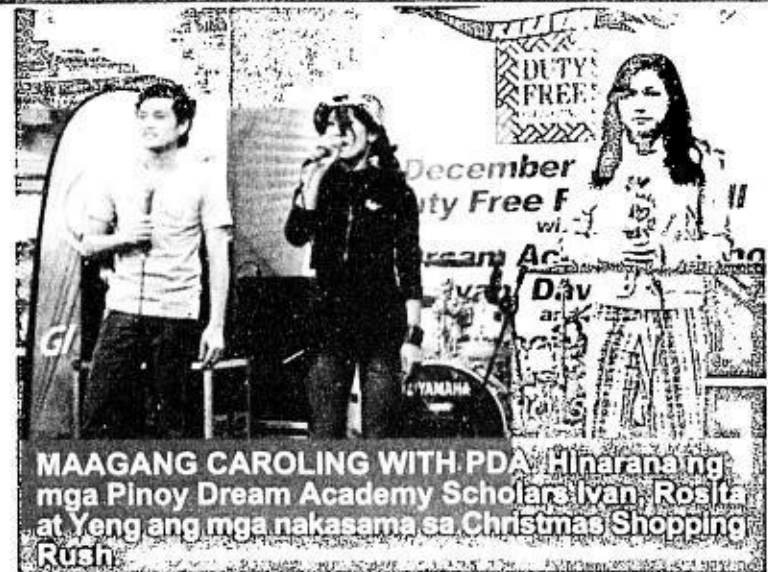
HANDOG-SAYA SA PAMILYA MULA SA GLOBE. Tuwang-tuwang tinanggap ng Sales Family mula kay Ryan Ricardo ng Globe ang tekening nagkakahalaga ng P25,000 sa Kabalik Christmas Salubong.



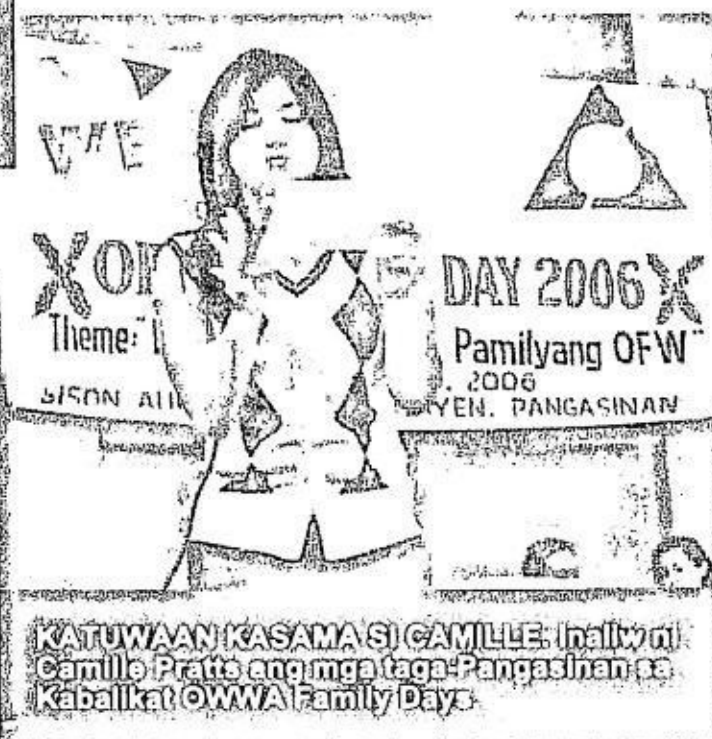
MAINIT NA PAGSUNDO PARA SA KABALIKAT. Dahil sa Globe, pinahit ni Case Pong ng Pinoy Big Brother ang pagsundo sa mga umuwing Pinoy sa NAIA.



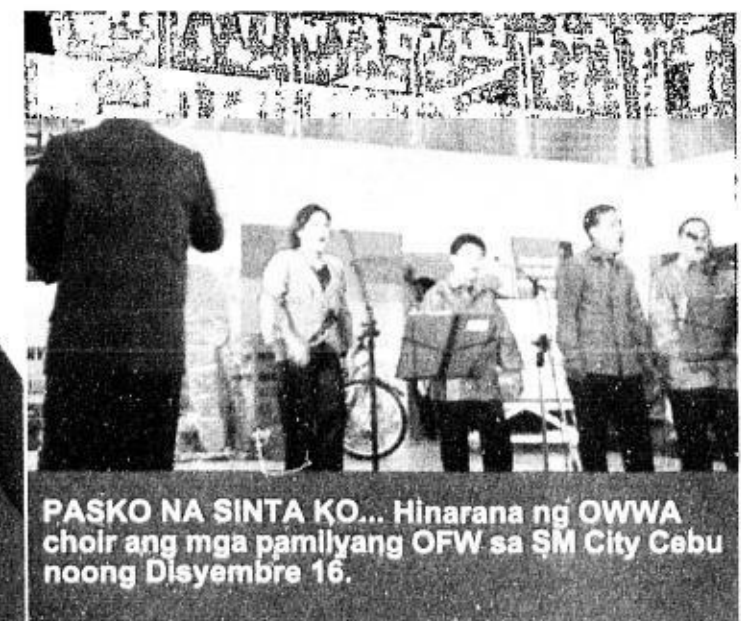
TODO SERBISYO PARA SA KABALIKAT. Nanalo ng iba't ibang papremyo ang nakasama sa opening ng Christmas Shopping Rush mula sa Duty Free at Globe.



MAAGANG CAROLING WITH PDA. Hinarana ng mga Pinoy Dream Academy Scholars Ivan Rosita at Yeng ang mga nakasama sa Christmas Shopping Rush.



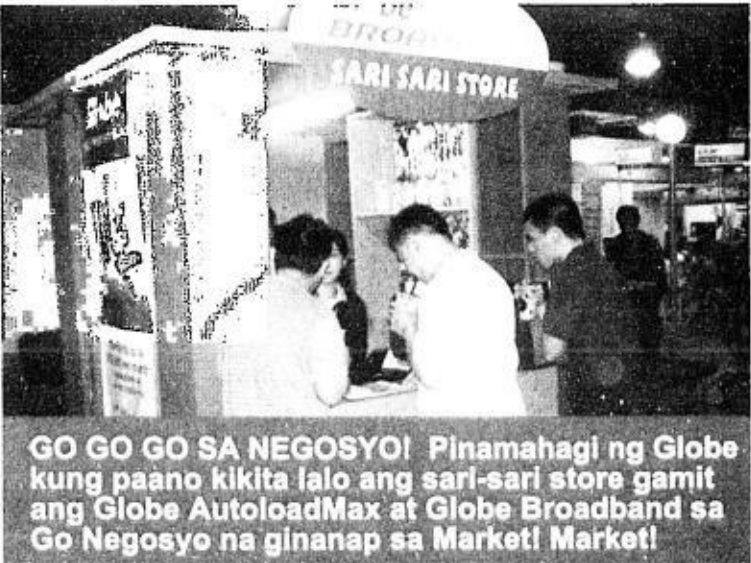
KATUWAAN KASAMA SI CAMILLE. Inaliw ni Camille Pratte ang mga taga-Pangasinan sa Kabalik OWWA Family Days.



PASKO NA SINTA KO... Hinarana ng OWWA choir ang mga pamilyang OFW sa SM City Cebu noong Disyembre 16.



KAMUSTA KABALIKAT? Sa participation ng Globe, nakisaya rin si Keempee de Leon sa opisina ng POEA.



GO GO GO SA NEGOSYO! Pinamahagi ng Globe kung paano kikita talo ang sari-sari store gamit ang Globe AutoloadMax at Globe Broadband sa Go Negosyo na ginanap sa Market! Market!



Overseas
Workers
Welfare
Administration



Philippine
Overseas
Employment
Administration



ang lakas mo sa





WHAT'S INSIDE

Dirk jumper caps mighty Mavs rally /A23

SPORTS

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Text us your feedback: inquirer.sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

RP team posts Asian U-19 rugby title romp /A24



PROMOTIONAL TUG-OF-WAR

Pacquiao gets better offer from DL Hoya

OSCAR DE LA HOYA'S Golden Boy Promotions yesterday upped the ante as it offered Filipino boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao a much better deal for a March 17 showdown with Mexican Marco Antonio Barrera.

A day after Pacquiao announced he had chosen Bob Arum as his promoter, Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer, in an interview with Boxingtalk, said Arum has no right claiming he is the legal promoter of Pacquiao.

"We have read reports out of the Philippines that Bob Arum made an offer to Golden Boy Promotions for \$2.5 million to provide the services of Marco Antonio Barrera for a fight with Manny Pacquiao on Apr. 28 in Las Vegas," Schaefer said.

"We are surprised by these actions since Top Rank doesn't have options on either fighter. Golden Boy, on the other hand, has a valid promotional deal with Barrera and believes that, ultimately, as well with Pacquiao."

Schaefer's offer came amid reports that Pacquiao's manager, Shelly Finkel, lambasted both Arum and the fighter after the press conference that was held at the Manila Hotel. (See sidebar)

Schaefer said that, while they understand that both Pacquiao and Barrera want to do the rematch, Golden Boy doesn't want to be a hindrance to that and "would be willing to stage this fight under a 50-50 deal."

"We further agree to put the promotional

Finkel calls Pacman disloyal, hits Bob Arum

SHELLY FINKEL YESTERDAY SAID HE was disappointed over Manny Pacquiao's choice of promoter and alluded to some of Bob Arum's statements as "false."

"Bob Arum is incorrect as usual," Finkel told Boxingconfidential.com, referring to Arum's statements that his managerial rights over Pacquiao had expired last August.

"The date of expiration is incorrect. A fighter always needs the right manager, so that a lawyer doesn't let him sign two contracts."

Finkel said the right manager would not have let Pacquiao sign any contract.

"I told Manny how I got him out of his problems with Murad [Muhammad] and also the [United States] government over taxes he owed," Finkel said.

"I also told him how I got him for the



FINKEL (right) with Pacquiao.

second Morales fight twice as much as what he got for [the first] Morales [fight] which he lost. He told me I didn't need to remind him of what I did for him.

"I really like Manny and wish him well. But I can't help being angry at Manny for his lack of loyalty and his bad choices," Finkel stated.

profits attributable to the Pacquiao side of the deal into an escrow account until such time that the courts decide who the legal promoter of Pacquiao is," Schaefer said.

These profits, he said, would be either distributed to either Golden Boy or Top Rank.

"It's now up to Manny Pacquiao to accept this deal, which is, of course, substantially better than this fight going to purse-bid where

Golden Boy would insist on the standard 75-25 split in favor of the champion, Marco Antonio Barrera," Schaefer said.

"We have the date, March 17. We have the site, The MGM Grand in Las Vegas and we have the PPV, which we believe is substantially better than doing the fight a week before the De La Hoya-Mayweather showdown." Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor



INSTEAD of drawing the ire of promoter-boxer Oscar De La Hoya, Manny Pacquiao (above) receives a tempting offer. GETTY IMAGES

13 coaches receive Asiad incentives

By June Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION yesterday released the cash incentives of coaches whose athletes bagged medals at the recent 15th Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.

PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez released a total of P3.95 million, as promised by President Macapagal-Arroyo to the 13 coaches from seven sports which gave the country a 4-6-9 gold-silver-bronze medal haul—its biggest in 44 years—in the Doha Asiad.

Topping the list of coaches is wushu's Samson Co, with P750,000 in bonuses for guiding Rene Catalan to the gold

and Eduard Folyang to the silver in the men's Sanshou event.

Ricardo Ancaja and Edgar Asonto of billiards fattened their bank accounts with P500,000 each after Antonio Gabica snared the gold in the 9-ball competitions and the silver in the 8-ball event.

Jeffrey de Luna's 9-ball silver—after he lost to Gabica—also contributed to the cash incentive of both coaches.

"The coaches are very well deserving of these incentives as much as the athletes are," said Ramirez. "They have also sacrificed a lot and it is only befitting that we also honor and recognize their achievements."

Boxing's Patricio Gaspi, Nolito Velas-

co and Ronald Chavez received P366,666 each for helping Joan Tipon and Violito Payla win the gold, on top of the bronze medals won by Godfrey Castro and Genebert Basadre.

The incentives were provided by the government under Republic Act 9064. Known as the Sports Incentives Act, RA 9064 grants P1 million for gold, P500,000 for silver and P100,000 for bronze medalists in the Asian Games.

Under the same law, coaches are entitled to 50 percent of the athletes' earnings, which will also come from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

Karate's David Lay earned P250,000 and his deputy Victorito Luna got P50,000 for leading Maria Mama Pabillore to the silver and Noel Espinosa to the bronze.

Stephen Fernandez, Roberto Cruz and Raul Samson of taekwondo lined their pockets with P216,666.67 each while Martin Misa of tennis and golf's Antonio Lopez earned P100,000 and P50,000, respectively.

The incentives of the coaches came after the 18 athletes who snared medals in the Doha Asiad received a total of P13.5 million, as provided by RA 9064, and the added bonuses doled out by the President.



WESLEY So stuns Indonesian GM Megaranto.

Wesley a point away from first GM norm

Standings after Round 7:

6.0 points—GM Zhao Jun (China); 5.5—IM Wesley So, GM Zhang Pengxiang (China), GM Zhang Zhong (China), GM Wang Hao (China), GM Li Shilong (China), GM Wu Wenjin (China), GM Le Quang Liem (Vietnam); 5.0—GM Ni Hua (China), GM Nguyen Anh Dung (Vietnam), IM Bui Vinh (Vietnam), IM Vijayaraghav (India); 4.5—IM Yves Rafoia, FM John Paul Gomez

FILIPINO WHIZ KID WESLEY SO REMAINED on track for a Grandmaster norm after posting back-to-back wins from the sixth round of the Singapore Masters tournament at the Asean Chess Academy in the Lion City.

So, the 13-year-old Fide Master with an Elo of 2411, now has 5.5 points, just a point away from the GM norm.

He drubbed Indonesian GM Susanto Megaranto in the sixth round late Thursday and China's Li Chao (2508) in the seventh yesterday.

So joined a seven-way tie for second place with Chinese bets Li Shilong, his eighth round opponent, GM Zhang Pengxiang, GM Zhang Zhong, GM Wang Hao, GM Wu Wenjin and Vietnamese GM Le Quang Liem.

The GM bids of IM Yves Rafoia and FM John Paul Gomez, however, got stalled after both dropped their seventh-round matches.

Gomez bowed to Wu, the 1996 Asian junior champion, while Rafoia lost to Vietnamese GM Le Quang Liem.

Rafoia and Gomez dropped to a tie for 13th place with 4.5 points with 10 others. Marlon Bernardino, contributor

Renewal for two La Salle powerhouses

By Jasmine W. Payo

THEIR HEARTS REBELLED AS THE GOING GOT tougher, but two powerhouse squads gallantly fought on.

Their UAAP title chase aborted this year, La Salle's women's football and women's volleyball squads brought their championship dreams elsewhere.

"The girls took it hard," said football coach Hans Smit. "They were crying. I told them the UAAP is just one tournament. But it's a shame because we were deprived of that five-peat. We were deprived of making history."

It was, on the whole, a year of renewal for the La Salle university sports program. On April 21, the UAAP board suspended La Salle for one year from all league sports for fielding two ineligible basketball players.

As a result, the dream of the women's volleyball squad to bag a fourth straight title was crushed.

"It was heartbreaking," said spiker Celine Anne Hernandez. "We're just thinking that we're jelling as a team for a longer period of time. We're getting to know each other better on and off the court."



DENIED: The Lady Archers fail to defend crown. REM

True enough, the lay-off hardly affected La Salle's top bets. The football squad bagged the titles in the Women's National Open Championships in Dumaguete and the UniGames in Bacolod.

"We have proven a lot this year," noted Smit. "The girls

lived up to my expectations in the UniGames. We scored 36 goals and shut out all our opponents. And this is our eighth straight title."

Also ruling two amateur tournaments, the volleyball team clinched the crowns in the Shakey's V-League and Home and Away.

"Our senior players kept telling us that whatever league comes, we're supposed to give our best, even during training," said Hernandez.

However, their strong showing failed to convince several promising players.

"In my batch, many tried out over the summer," said Hernandez. "Now we don't have much people coming in. Some are worried that their level of play would go down if they'll be out for one year."

Still, the coaching staff and the players managed to stay upbeat. "It's never easy for them to come out and be at their best all the time that's why I tell them to just play to their hearts delight," said Smit.

"It's all about discipline if we want to stay good or be greater in the next UAAP," added Hernandez.

Pagunsan bags Kukji golf title in sudden death

ASIAN TOUR VETERAN REY PAGUNSAN nailed an uphill putt from 10 feet for birdie in the second playoff hole yesterday to turn back obscure Orlan Sumcad and complete a come-from-behind win in the Kukji Environment Inc. yearend tournament.

After turning in a final round four-under-par 64 for a 36-hole 132 total at the short but tight Camp Aguinaldo layout, the 40-year-old Pagunsan knocked down the putt that mattered for the P100,000 top prize.



PAGUNSAN

Pagunsan shot a 68 on Thursday and opened up with a double bogey-7 to fall further off.

He started the rally by gunning down birds in each of the next three holes after that, before knocking down four more in the backside which proved enough to catch Sumcad on top.

Sumcad, who played near-flawless in his version of a 64 Thursday, drove to the left tree-lined rough in the second playoff hole, the par-5 eighth, and was forced to lay up, his attempt for birdie from the fringe stopping a good foot be-

fore the hole.

But the 33-year-old, who teaches at the Club Malarayat range in Lipa City, couldn't find the magic that gave him a one-stroke overnight lead, struggling to find the small greens of the military layout.

Senior circuit veteran Juanito Pagunsan, father of rising Asian star Juvic, turned in a 69 and missed the playoff by two strokes with 134.

Robert Pactolerin struggled to card a 71 for fifth with a 138 total.



Republic of the Philippines DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR NO. DC2006-12-0014

REITERATING A TRANSPARENT AND COMPETITIVE SYSTEM OF AWARDING SERVICE/OPERATING CONTRACTS FOR COAL, GEOTHERMAL AND PETROLEUM PROSPECTIVE AREAS, REPEALING FOR THIS PURPOSE DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR NO. 2003-05-005 AND DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR NO. 2005-04-004

WHEREAS, Section 1 of Presidential Decree No. 1442, otherwise known as "An Act to Promote the Exploration and Development of Geothermal Resources," Section 4 of Presidential Decree No. 972, as amended, otherwise known as "The Coal Development Act of 1976," and Section 4 of Presidential Decree No. 87, as amended, otherwise known as the "Oil Exploration and Development Act of 1972," allow the Philippine Government to promote and undertake the exploration, development and production of the country's indigenous coal, geothermal and petroleum resources through service/operating contracts with contractors;

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 7638, as amended, otherwise known as "The Department of Energy (DOE) Act of 1992," mandates the DOE to prepare, integrate, coordinate, supervise and control all plans, programs, projects and activities of the Government relative to energy exploration, development, utilization, distribution and conservation;

WHEREAS, on 19 May 2003 and 20 April 2005, the DOE issued Department Circular No. 2003-05-005 and 2005-04-004, respectively, both providing for investment promotion and public contracting rounds for awarding coal, geothermal and petroleum service/operating contracts;

WHEREAS, the DOE desires to adopt the most effective strategy for promoting and attracting local and foreign investment to further increase the exploration, development and production of prospective coal, geothermal and petroleum areas;

WHEREAS, the DOE reiterates and acknowledges the need to continue adopting a transparent and competitive system for awarding service/operating contracts for exploration, development and production of the country's coal, geothermal and petroleum resources;

WHEREAS, consistent with national interest, the DOE has, after consultation with stakeholders, resolved to enhance government participation, through the government corporate sector, in the exploration, development and production of indigenous oil and gas resources through the grant of option to PNOC to participate in petroleum service contracts;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the aforementioned premises, the following procedures shall govern the transparent and competitive system of awarding service/operating contracts for coal, geothermal and petroleum exploration, development and production.

1. Contracting Rounds

- 1.1 The Energy Resource Development Bureau (ERDB) shall determine prospective coal, or geothermal, or petroleum areas found in the Philippine territory and its maritime zones including the continental shelf for inclusion in the competitive public contracting rounds. The DOE Secretary, upon the recommendation of the ERDB Director and the Undersecretary exercising supervision over ERDB, shall declare such areas open for competitive public contracting round. The DOE shall not accept any application or proposals for exploration, development and production service/operating contracts except during the competitive public contracting rounds. No applications for small-scale mining permit for coal operations shall likewise be entertained in the offered areas until after service/operating contracts have been awarded.
- 1.2 The ERDB shall prepare the contracting round documents with a description of available data and the prospect of geothermal/coal/petroleum resources in each area. The DOE Contract Negotiating Panel (DOE-CNP per Department Order No. 2003-05-005) shall then disseminate information of the contracting round which shall include, among others, the following:
 - a. Location Map and Technical Descriptions (TDs) of the area/s being offered during the contracting round;
 - b. Schedule of activities for the contracting round; and
 - c. Such other information as the DOE-CNP may deem appropriate.
- 1.3 Interested parties for the contracting rounds on petroleum may access data available at DOE after payment of a Data Viewing Fee of Five Hundred United States Dollars (US\$500.00) for a two (2)-day maximum visit. If the interested party decides to purchase the DOE data, the Data Viewing Fee will be credited to the total price of the purchased data.
- 1.4 Interested parties for the contracting rounds on petroleum, coal and geothermal areas shall submit complete set of documents for evaluation by the DOE-CNP. The DOE-CNP may require submission of additional information/documents, as may be necessary, during evaluation of the proposals for clarification purposes only. A non-refundable application fee based on DOE's Schedule of Fees and Charges in compliance with EO 197 shall be paid by the applicant upon submission of the application/proposal which should include the following documents:

a. Work Program

- a.1 Proposed oil/gas service contract, geothermal service contract or coal operating contract based on existing DOE Model Contracts;
- a.2 Proposed work program (discussion on the application of the different exploration strategies and methodologies to be employed in delineating energy resources at depth with subsequent manpower complement should be in detailed narrative format and the Schedule of Activities in Grant Chart) and minimum expenditure on annual/sub-phase basis for each proposed activity with respect to the area or areas specified in the proposal; and
- a.3 Narrative presentation of data and information (such as geology, stratigraphy, geochemistry, geophysics, water or coal quality; resource estimate, resource indicators, etc.) suggesting presence of energy resources at depth.

b. Financial Proposal and Documentation

- b.1 Audited financial statements and annual reports for the last three (3) years;
- b.2 Duly filled-out information sheet;
- b.3 Resume/profile of the prospective contractor, its incorporators, stockholders or officers;
- b.4 Particulars of the kind of financial resources available to the prospective contractor including capital, credit facilities and guarantees so available; and
- b.5 Certified copy of latest income business tax returns filed with the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and duly validated with the tax payment made thereon, if applicable.

c. Legal Documentation

- c.1 Certified copy of Articles of Incorporation;
- c.2 Certified copy of the by-laws of the prospective contractor;
- c.3 SEC Registration Certificate; and
- c.4 Certified copy of latest general information sheet submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

d. Technical Proposal and Documentation

- d.1 Particulars of the technical and industrial qualifications, eligibilities and work related experiences of the interested party and its employees;
- d.2 Particulars of the technical and industrial resources available to the interested party for the exploration, development and production of geothermal, coal and petroleum resources;
- d.3 Particulars on the experiences, achievements and track records of the interested party and its employees related to technical and industrial undertakings; and
- d.4 Particulars on organizational and management structures relative to Administration, Financial and Technical aspect of the interested party.

For financial, legal and technical documentation, if the interested party is a joint venture, all entities forming part of the joint venture shall comply with the above requirements. In addition, the interested party shall submit a copy of the joint venture agreement. Furthermore, any interested party, acting singly or forming part of a joint venture, that is organized in a foreign country shall submit documents equivalent to the above, issued by the appropriate governing body and duly authenticated by the Philippine consulate in the country where it is registered or where it operates.

- 1.5 The DOE CNP shall open the submitted proposals relative to the contracting round during the first working day after the announced deadline for submission of proposals. No proposals or contracting documents shall be accepted on the designated day of the opening of proposals.
- 1.6 The DOE CNP shall then conduct evaluation of the submitted proposals based on the following criteria:
 - a. Proposed work program — 40%
 - b. Financial qualification — 20%
 - c. Legal qualification — 20%
 - d. Technical qualifications — 20%
 The DOE CNP, for sufficient and valid cause, may at any given time reject any or all proposals submitted.
- 1.7 The DOE shall discuss with the highest-ranked proponent to finalize the contract details. No material deviation from the submitted proposal shall be allowed at any given time. The DOE CNP shall then make a recommendation to the DOE Secretary for any award of service/operating contracts based on the negotiations conducted. The DOE shall formally inform all the interested parties of the results of the evaluation.

2. **Contract Areas.** The definition and delineation of prospective coal, geothermal and petroleum contract areas shall be in accordance with the provisions of applicable government laws, rules and existing procedures such as the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Law and the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA), among others.

3. Option for PNOC to participate in Petroleum Service Contracts

For petroleum service contracts proposed under this Circular, an option shall be reserved for the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) for a maximum of ten percent (10%) equity participation in a proposed service contract involving one (1) or more Filipino participant or a maximum of fifteen percent (15%) equity participation in a proposed service contract involving no Filipino participant. Within thirty (30) days after the winning proponent is determined, PNOC shall give proper notice to the winning proponent and the DOE whether or not it decides to exercise said option.

4. **Separability Clause.** If for any reason, any section or provision of this Circular is declared unconstitutional or invalid, such parts not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

5. **Repealing Clause.** The provisions of Department Circular No. 2003-05-005 and Department Circular No. 2005-04-004 are hereby repealed. All other department circulars, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Circular are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

6. **Effectivity.** This Circular shall take into effect immediately after publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation and shall remain in effect until otherwise revoked.

Issued this 22nd day of December, 2006 in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila.

(Sgd.) RAPHAE P.M. LOTILLA
Secretary

(FDI - December 30, 2006)

SPORTS

Gabica, De Luna team up in Tokyo

RP ASIAN GAMES MEDALISTS Antonio Gabica and Jeffrey de Luna shoot for the top prize in the 2006 Mezz Crowd Nine Cup Invitational Billiards Tournament today at the Crowd Nine Billiard hall in Tokyo, Japan.

Gabica and De Luna, the gold-silver medal winners in the Doha Asian Games, will team up and vie for the 1-million yen (around US \$8,400 or P420,000) champion's purse.

World-class bets from Chinese-Taipei, Korea and Japan will also be competing in the one-day Scotch Doubles-format competition.

Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) president Ernesto Fajardo said the tandem of Gabica and De Luna is a good choice.

"They can very much relate with each other, which is necessary in a Scotch Doubles competition," said Fajardo.

The Scotch Doubles format requires teammates to take a shot alternately whether they make or miss the pocket.

"They practice together; I think they have a pretty strong chance of winning this tournament," added Fajardo.

For their first assignment, Gabica



ANTONIO Gabica (right) and Jeff De Luna celebrate during the Doha Asian Games.

and De Luna must hurdle former world champion Wu Chia Ching and Yang Ching-Shun of Chinese-Taipei in the knockout-format tourney.

Yang and Wu, together with former world pool titlist Fong Pang-Chao, were the top three finishers in the 2006 Super Cup in Taipei.

"Gagawin namin ni Jeff ang lahat para makapagbigay muli ng karangalan sa ating bansa (We will do our best to bring honor once again to our country)," the 34-year-old Gabica said.

Gabica defeated De Luna in the 9-ball singles Finals to bag the gold in the recent 15th Asian Games in Doha, Qatar. He also secured a silver in the 8-ball competition to emerge as the most successful Filipino athlete in the regional meet.

On the other side of the draw, former world champion Kunihiro Takahashi and 17-year-old Hayato Hijikata of Japan will go up against Jeong Young-Hwa and Kim Woong-Dae of Korea.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Pacman's polish, a pregnant pause

By Percy D. Della

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA—From almost bare to bundled up. From the tropics to the tundra.

I'm back in California's capital, among Arnold's small army of public information officers.

At the dawn of a new Schwarzenegger administration, I'll be toiling for five months at the most.

Bless the governor's energy advisers for bringing me back yet again from retirement in coastal Tamuning, Pohnpei, Candon City, Ilocos Sur.

It won't be too shabby either to earn my share of overseas remittances and keep our economy afloat.

Rain, sometimes in torrents, has come in spurts since I got back. With the cold air that blows from the Sierra Nevadas, late autumn has been terrible.

Anyway, on to sports news at hand.

Area Olympian Vicente Escobedo just keeps punching so he could fight for real money, possibly in May for the biggest fight that can be made in boxing—the Oscar de la Hoya vs Floyd Mayweather Jr. match on HBO pay per view.

Escobedo, dubbed Sacramento's last best hope for boxing glory, defeated Julian Rodriguez of Juarez, Mexico recently.

The journeyman was supposed to be easy picking, but Escobedo en-

gaged his opponent in a swinging match instead of using his boxing skills. Both fighters went to the canvas in the third. More embarrassed than hurt, Escobedo, the 2004 Olympian, finally sent his quarry crumbling to the canvas for good, 55 seconds left in the next round.

Trainer Freddie Roach credits Escobedo's 11th knockout victory to the boxer's ability to turn the fight around quickly.

Escobedo, who fights at 132 pounds, in turn credits his victory to Manny Pacquiao's polish. He said he learned to rise to the occasion during his stint as Pacquiao's primary spar-

play in Los Angeles again.

"Oh baby," wrote Los Angeles Times columnist Bill Plaschke in his own inimitable way. "A twist is little something that happens to an ankle or an O. Henry story. This is a twist and shout."

Wrote Plaschke:

"The new owners just paid \$10 million for a luxury car without an engine. They just bought a \$10-million house with no electricity. They are embarking on the most difficult sports sales mission in this city and, oh, by the way, they just lost their only recognizable asset."

"God bless you, Lisa Leslie. Heaven help you, Christofferson and Goodman," the columnist added.

COMMENTARY

ring partner for the Filipino champion's recent third-round knockout of Erik Morales in Las Vegas.

Entrepreneurs Carla Christofferson and Kathy Goodman recently bought the Los Angeles Sparks WNBA franchise from Dr. Jerry Buss for a reported \$10 million.

No sooner had the partners spoken at their introductory news conference than the team's franchise player made an announcement of her own.

She's pregnant. Lisa Leslie said she's two months in the family way and will miss the first season of the new owners. Leslie even said she could not say if she will ever

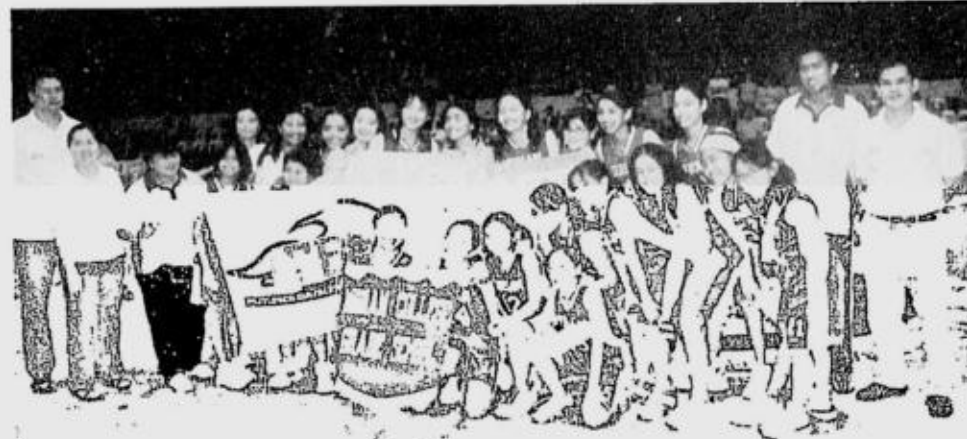
Someone other than the Lakers' Kobe Bryant hit for 60 points last December 17th.

To rub salt to an open wound, it was Gilbert Arenas of the Washington Wizards who beat the Lakers 147-141 in overtime, despite Kobe's 45-point, 10-rebound and eight-assist production. The Lakers had not allowed a player to score as many points against them since Wilt Chamberlain had 65 in February 1966.

Arenas, one of the many players overlooked by LA in the draft, was a local basketball standout at Van Nuys Grant High School in the San Fernando Valley area of LA.

CAGE CHAMPS

Players and team officials of the Miriam College girls' basketball team pose for posterity after downing Community of Learners Foundation, 38-19, and winning the recent NCR Futures Basketball League championship at the Blue Eagle Gym in Katipunan, Quezon City. The FBL was backed by Smart Bro, Nike, Gatorade, Primoviv, Multivitamin and Accord Capital.



SPORTSWATCH

100 fights in LP 4-cocker

AN IMPRESSIVE LINEUP OF COCKFIGHT CHAMPIONS is vying in the New Year 4-Cock Derby which gets going at 5 p.m. today the Las Piñas Coliseum with more than 100 fights. To be hosted by Mayor Nene Aguilar, the derby is the second of two major draws held every year at the LPC. Girding up for today's showdown are cockers such as Gerry Ramos, Boy de Roca, Patrick Antonio, Raymond Burgos, Jojo Revilla, Art Perez, Marlon de Castro, Emil Chua, Paeng Arriaga, Ramon Revilla, Eric Carreon, RC Sayman, Angel Torres, Danny Alejo, Richard Tingson, Yoyoy Dahonog, Vice Mayor Ruben Taguba, Henry Medina, Jover Dilao and Monching Ignacio.

'Salpukan' at Makati today

SIXTY-SEVEN SURVIVORS FROM A HUGE FIELD OF 257 set their sights on the P3 million guaranteed prize in today's championship round of Pamaskong Salpukan 6-Cock Derby at the Makati Coliseum. Backed up by Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador, the event will feature 100 fights starting at 4 p.m., said hosts Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co of WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. Among those with perfect scores of three wins each so far are Gov. Ito Ynares, Tony Lasala, Butch Olanio (two entries), Raymond Velayo, Lito Orillaza and Efrén Carlos, Teng Ranola, Richard Bates, A. Lainez and Col. Katigbak.

Filipinos vs American breeders in NCA World Championship Derby

TOP FILIPINO AND AMERICAN gamefowl breeders and cockfighting enthusiasts will battle it out in the National Cockers' Association (NCA) World Championship Derby on Jan. 9, 11 and 13 at the Pasay City Cockpit.

The participation of the very best Filipino and American cockers in the derby shows why the NCA World Championship, sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor, is widely held to be the toughest and most prestigious derby in the world.

Heavy favorites Larry Whitehead, Joe Wolcott, Tom Cooper, Eddie Odell, Dan Gray and Jeff Hudspeth are confident of beating their Filipino counterparts, as do San Francisco's Larry Barletta and Fil-Ams

Rene Medina and Ric De Guzman.

The other top entries are Gene Batia, Jimbo Cox, Damon Yorkman, Andy Robertson, Red Lawson, Rey Morrison, Richard Borris, Chuck Halbert, Richard Lanier, Paul Pasot, Jason Campbell, Bryan Cochran, Jose Sanford and Crow Grave.

The Filipinos, however, are ready to give the Americans a tough fight.

Among the top local bets are Manny Pacquiao, Ramon Revilla, Rep. Iggy Arroyo, Manolo Lopez, Gov. Ito Ynares, Sec. Ronnie Puno, Jun Santiago, Edwin Abella, Boy Jiao, Rudy Albano, Danding Cojuangco, Fiscal Villanueva, brothers Eddie and Boboy Arana, Patrick Antonio, brothers Raffy and Mauro Prieto, and JV Magsaysay.

Dirk jumper caps mighty Mavs rally

Iverson gifts coach Karl 800th win

DALLAS—DIRK NOWITZKI HIT a 19-foot jumper with 1.3 seconds left and the Dallas Mavericks rallied to beat the Phoenix Suns, 101-99, on Thursday night for their eighth straight victory.

Nowitzki took a pass in the right wing from Jason Terry and made the shot over Shawn Marion. The Suns had one more chance after a timeout and the inbound pass, but Amare Stoudemire's shot bounced off the front of the rim as time expired. That ended Phoenix's eight-game road winning streak.

Terry had 35 points and eight assists, setting up the final two Dallas baskets in the last 23 seconds. Steve Nash, the two-time NBA MVP since leaving Dallas, had an ally-oop pass to Stoudemire with about a minute left to tie the game at 97.

Nowitzki had 27 points and 10 rebounds, while Howard finished with 16 points and 12 rebounds. Stoudemire scored 25 points, and Nash finished with 24 points—on 10-of-14 shooting—and 13 assists for the Suns.

At San Antonio, Tony Parker scored 22 points, Tim Duncan added 20 and San Antonio cruised to its 15th consecutive home victory over Utah, 106-83.

Parker hit all five of his shots from the floor and scored 12 points in the second quarter as the Spurs turned a one-point lead into a 15-point advantage at halftime.

In Denver, George Karl couldn't have drawn up his 800th win any better—playing short-handed, making up plays on the fly in timeouts, inclement weather outside.

This was his kind of game. That's why the Nuggets coach was all smiles after getting his milestone victory in Denver's 112-98 win over the Seattle SuperSonics—his former team—on Thursday night.

Karl was handed a Denver jersey with No. 800 on it along with the game ball after beating the Sonics to become only the 12th coach



NOWITZKI acknowledges cheers after nailing the game-winning basket.

in NBA history to reach the 800-win mark.

"Tonight's game was fun because I thought from the minute they went on the court they thought they were going to win the game," said Karl, who's 800-555 in 19 seasons.

Karl has a superstar in Allen Iverson, who finished with 44 points and 10 assists. Iverson had his highest-scoring game since being acquired by Denver in a trade with Philadelphia on Dec. 19. His season high is 46 against Chicago on Nov. 24.

"He's good," Karl said. "He's better than I thought and I thought he was (damn) good."

After coming out of the lineup with 1:04 remaining, Iverson and Karl had a brief conversation and then a quick hug.

"To be a part of something like that is something to cherish," Iverson said. "It was an honor to help him get that win."

Grizzlies fire Fratello

Memphis, Tennessee—The NBA's Memphis Grizzlies fired coach Mike Fratello on Thursday after an NBA-worst 6-24 start.

The Grizzlies' career winningest coach, Fratello had a 95-83 record and had guided Memphis to consecutive playoff appearances. Tony Barone Sr., the Grizzlies' director of player personnel, was selected to be the interim coach.

Fratello started the season without All-Star center Pau Gasol of Spain, who broke his foot this summer in the world championships. AP

Yao, probable All-Star game absentee, leading vote-getter

NEW YORK—HOUSTON ROCKETS CENTER Yao Ming, sidelined by a broken leg, still leads the overall voting for February's National Basketball Association All-Star game in fan balloting figures released Thursday.

Yao has 1,411,923 votes and boasts a huge edge over Phoenix's Amare Stoudemire (485,642) at his position.

But the 7-foot-5 Chinese center, who is having the best season of his career, broke his right leg against the Los Angeles Clippers on Saturday and is unlikely to return before the All-Star Game, meaning he will almost certainly miss the mid-season exhibition for the first time in his NBA career.

He was voted onto the starting lineup the past four years.

Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant is second among vote-getters in the West, with 1,187,505 votes. He is followed by Houston's Tracy McGrady (1,057,057) and Denver's recent import from the East, Allan Iverson

(975,319).

There is a close race at forward in the West, where Minnesota's Kevin Garnett (785,865), San Antonio's Tim Duncan (715,916) and Dallas' Dirk Nowitzki (684,620) are separated by little more than 100,000 votes.

With Iverson's move from Philadelphia, New Jersey's Vince Carter has climbed into the top two among Eastern Conference guards in the second returns of fan voting.

The New Jersey Nets' leading scorer, Carter trailed Iverson and Miami Heat superstar Dwyane Wade when the league released the first balloting return two weeks ago.

But Iverson, who was sitting idly on the trading block at the time, has since undergone a dramatic change. The four-time scoring champion was eliminated from the Eastern ballot after being dealt to the Nuggets on Dec. 20.

Since the NBA-ABA merger in 1976, only one player—Carter, in 2005—was traded before the Game and was still voted to start. AP



YAO: Doubtful starter

Roger has same aim next year: Win French

PARIS—TENNIS EMBRACES MAJOR changes in 2007 but Roger Federer's paramount New Year resolution remains the same—to win the French Open.



FEDERER

The Swiss superstar racked up another record-smashing year in 2006 with 12 titles, a 92-5 match record in which he won back his Australian Open title and defended his Wimbledon and US Open crowns.

But the French Open still eludes him.

"It's obviously my goal to win it," said the world number one.

"I got a step closer in 2006. I think every year that goes by gives me again more maturity on this surface."

Victory on the Roland Garros clay in June would make him only the sixth man to capture all four Grand Slams, but for the last two years it's been eventual champion Rafael Nadal who has stood in his way.

The muscular Spaniard starts the new season, unlike the beginning of 2006, fully fit, but in a title slump.

A crippling foot injury ruled the world number two out of the first six weeks of this year, an absence which also included the opening Grand Slam event in Australia.

But in 2007, the French Open champion is wasting no time in his build-up to Melbourne. He begins his season on Jan. 1 at the Chennai Open and then travels to Sydney. AP

YEARENDER

Zidane's fall from grace; drug cheat Landis top stories

LONDON—MIDWAY THROUGH extra time in the soccer World Cup final, Zinedine Zidane rose majestically to head the goal designed to claim the trophy for France.

Instead, the consistently excellent Italian keeper Gianluigi Buffon arched high to tip the ball one-handed over the bar and preserve the 1-1 scoreline.

What subsequently passed through Zidane's mind in the dying moments of a career that had taken him from the backstreets of Marseille to the glamorous European club giants Juventus and Real Madrid?

Confounding the pessimists, he had gradually recaptured the form which propelled France to their 1998 World Cup triumph. But after Buffon's save, he must have known his final chance of glory on the game's ultimate stage had all but vanished.

Certainly something snapped 10 minutes before the final whistle at the Berlin Olympic stadium.

After a brief altercation, the French captain suddenly head-butted Marco Materazzi in the

chest and was sent from the field. His demoralized team then succumbed, 5-3, in the penalty shoot-out.

Zidane's abrupt fall from grace mirrored the light and shade of a troubled sporting year.

In July it was announced that Tour de France winner Floyd Landis and Olympic 100 meters champion Justin Gatlin had tested positive for the male sex hormone testosterone.

Landis' failed test followed an astonishing win in the 17th stage after the American had apparently dropped out of contention on the previous day.

The Tour had already lost what little credibility it still retained when the 1997 winner Jan Ullrich and Giro d'Italia champion Ivan Basso were withdrawn by their teams as a result of a Spanish doping investigation.

Because of Gatlin's positive test, track fans have been denied the showdowns they craved against Jamaican Asafa Powell, who equaled his own 100 meters world record twice this year. Reuters

Hingis to tie knot with Czech star Stepanek

SYDNEY—FORMER WORLD number one Martina Hingis is to marry Czech tennis player Radek Stepanek.

The 26-year-old Hingis confirmed news of her engagement at a media conference at the Gold Coast on Friday where she is preparing to play the Australian women's hardcourt championships.

Hingis said 28-year-old Stepanek, ranked 19th in the world, had proposed to her in Prague last month but it was not until she arrived in Australia that anyone noticed her diamond ring.

"I was surprised when it was spotted right away because in Switzerland I've been walking around for a month and no-one's said anything," she told reporters.

"I guess people here pay more attention to things."

Hingis dominated women's tennis in the late 1990s, winning the Australian Open three times in a row from 1997 to 1999, before ankle and foot injuries forced her into early retirement in 2002.

She took three years off before



HINGIS: Engaged

making a comeback last year, finishing the season ranked in the world's top 10.

Stepanek will make a comeback of his own at next week's Australian men's hardcourt championships in Adelaide. He reached the quarterfinals at Wimbledon this year but has not played since after dislocating a disc in his neck. Reuters

MLB union challenges new anti-drug ruling

LOS ANGELES—THE MAJOR League Baseball Players Association Thursday indicated it would challenge an appeals court ruling giving investigators access to supposedly confidential drug test results of some of its members.

A three-judge panel of the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeal, hearing the case of the United States vs Comprehensive Drug Testing Inc., said Wednesday that lower courts erred in blocking access to the information.

The results of the tests conducted by Major League Baseball in 2003 could provide evidence as to whether any of the star players who testified to a grand jury in the BALCO steroid scandal—including San Francisco Giants slugger Barry Bonds—committed perjury.

However, the players union and two laboratories involved, Quest Diagnostics and Comprehensive Drug Testing Inc., argued

that seizure of the records violated privacy rights.

"We respectfully disagree with the two judges who comprised the majority in this case," union executive director Donald Fehr said in a statement issued on Thursday. "As the dissent noted, if this opinion is allowed to stand it will effectively repeal the Fourth Amendment for confidential electronic records."

"Under a search warrant seeking information about only 11 baseball players, confidential records for every player were seized, along with confidential records of thousands of other people with no connection to baseball, including many with no connection to sports."

"The government seeks to retain all of this private information about thousands of people who were not the subject of any criminal inquiry..." AP

Hurting Wade day-to-day case

MIAMI—FURTHER TESTS ON THURSDAY confirmed the wrist injury of Miami Heat guard Dwyane Wade is a sprain, and he will be a game-time decision for Friday's National Basketball Association game against New Jersey.

Wade, who was named the Most Valuable Player of the NBA finals last June as the Heat downed Dallas to claim the title, was hurt with six minutes left in the opening quarter of Wednesday's 109-103 loss to Chicago.

The 24-year-old underwent an X-ray on Wednesday that indicated a sprain and an MRI on Thursday confirmed the diagnosis.

A two-time All-Star, Wade is averaging 28.6 points and 8.2 assists per game in 25 games this season. He currently leads all Eastern Conference guards in All-Star votes.

Thanks to the brilliant play of Wade, the Heat stormed to their first championship last June. But the Heat have fallen on hard times this season, losing in embarrassing fashion to Chicago on the opening night of the season and dropping eight of their first 12 games.

Miami already is without All-Star center Shaquille O'Neal, who is still sidelined with torn knee cartilage. AP

Finishing race a victory in itself, says Wild Oats skipper

HOBART—THE SKIPPER OF THE MAXI that won the treacherous Sydney to Hobart yacht race said Friday that crossing the line in one piece was a major victory after nine boats were abandoned or retired.

Mark Richards, who skippered Wild Oats XI to a historic back-to-back victory Thursday after some two days and nine

hours of racing, said he was happy the boat and crew had survived the grueling race.

"It's a tough race out there," he told commercial television. "Really tough conditions, a lot of casualties, a lot of damage but Wild Oats came through unscathed."

Wild Oats was only the sixth yacht to

win consecutive Sydney to Hobart races since the competition's inception in 1945, and was the first to do so since Astor achieved the feat in 1963 and 1964.

The 30-meter (100-foot) maxi crossed the Battery Point finish line in Hobart at 9:52 pm (1052 GMT), clocking a time of two days, eight hours, 52 minutes and 33 seconds of racing and arriving four hours

ahead of its closest rival.

Shortly before 2 am Friday, 70-footer Ichi Ban and maxi Skandia took second and third line honors just 16 minutes apart.

Rough weather on the first night of racing left several of the 78-strong fleet reeling, with one competitor sunk and eight others forced to retire.

Wild Oats took the lead in the early stages of the race but temporarily slipped back behind rival maxi Maximus and the 21-meter ABN Amro before both were dismasted in rough weather before dawn on Wednesday.

Six crew members on the Maximus were injured when the mast and rigging crashed onto them. AP

SPORTS

RP team posts Asian U-19 rugby romp

THE PHILIPPINES SCORED its first international major triumph in a sport that's still trying to make a headway at home—rugby.

An RP Under-19 squad swept all its three matches in the Asian Championships in Chinese Taipei recently to bag the Division B title over Brunei, Guam and the Arabian Gulf.

The RP squad scored a total of 13 touchdowns for an overall record of 97-13, including a 64-0 shutout of Brunei in the Fil-

ipinos' second assignment.

Matthew Saunders led the RP assault by scoring five touchdowns followed by Andrew Barbacetto, who had two.

The victory also gave local officials hope that the RP team will be promoted to Division A action in next year's Asian championships, where powerhouse nations like Japan and South Korea hold sway.

Gareth Holgate, Jacob Wood, Jake Letts, James Youngt, Joseph Kuhlrow and Sam Martin were the other touchdown scorers for the Philippines.

The RP squad blasted Guam, 12-3, and whipped Arabian Gulf, 21-10.



MEMBERS of the RP squad celebrate their Asian Championship Group B victory.

Escares outduels Malaysian in Jr Cup

MARK ESCARES FINALLY pricked the bubble of foreign domination in the Milo Junior Tennis Cup with a 6-4, 7-6 win yesterday against Augustine Chang of Malaysia's Sarawak State at the Philam Homes Tennis Club in Quezon City.

Escares disputes the unisex 10-under title today with Vince Mark Tabotabo, a budding age grouper from Tuburan in Cebu, who nipped Vince Salas 6-2, 7-6.

And with no foreign entry in the draw, Dheo Talatayod tangles with Jacob Lagman for the boys' 12-under trophy; while Crizabelle Paulino of Olongapo City meets Marian Capadocia for the girls' 12-under jewel.

In the boys' 14-under division, Iori Uehara pipped Jose Lorenzo Ferrer 6-4, 7-5 and Jun Onishi edged Kyle Cordero 6-4, 6-4 to arrange an all-Japan final.

Arissa Murakami blanked Chynna Mamawal 6-0, 6-0 to gain a championship seat against Hyogo Tennis Club teammate Ryoko Sanada, a similar 6-0, 6-0 victor past Jella Capadocia in the girls' 14-under.

GOLDEN SWEEP

Kristel Mariel Punzalan, representing Gymnastics Center of the Philippines, shows the form that carried her to a sweep of the five gold medals at stake in the 8-9 age class (Level I) of women's artistic gymnastics at the recent Milo 2006 Bea Lucero Gymnastics Cup. The nine-year-old Punzalan posted a total score of 35.20 in topping the floor exercise, horse vault, balance beam and uneven bars. That also gave her the runaway victory in the all-around exercises. The one-day tournament, backed by Milo as part of its grassroots sports development program, drew teams from schools and gymnastics clubs in Metro Manila.



KONIKA MINOLTA PRO-AM

Cantada, Tanpinco gun for 4th straight crown

GERALD CANTADA AND JR TANPINCO WILL be back to defend their crown in the Konika Minolta Pro-Am Championships set Jan. 31 to Feb. 3 at The Riviera's Langer in Silang, Cavite.

"I have received word that JR will take a break from his studies in the United States for us to be able to defend our crown," said Cantada.

Cantada and Tanpinco recorded history last year when they scored a third straight victory in the tournament.

Edilberto B. Bravo, the U-Bix Corp. founder and Konika Minolta franchisee who revived the fabled Pro-Am in 2001, welcomed the decision of Cantada and Tanpinco.

"Their decision to come back bodes well to our tournament that really appreciates quality players as well as performances of our participants," said Bravo.

The winners will pocket close to P500,000 in the P1.7-million tournament that allows a professional and an amateur to hit one ball alternately from tee to green.

Bravo revived the event together with the National Golf Association of the Philippines and Tabaniaga, a founding member of the Pro-Am

in 1958, after it got shelved following the privatization of Fort Bonifacio, the Pro-Am's old home, in 1998.

The Pro-Am was a much-awaited leg of the Philippine Golf Circuit then bankrolled by San Miguel Corp. Among its past champions was Ben Arda, who died just very recently while working as a teaching pro at Alabang.

The first winners in its revival in 2001 were professional Noli Kempis and amateur Erwin Vinluan. The pair is expected to be back next month.

The Miñoza brothers, Raul and Paul, won the second edition before Cantada and Tanpinco combined to win the next three tournaments.

Aside from the prize money, this year's sixth staging of the event offers a Toyota vehicle as a hole-in-one prize.

A Celebrity Pro-Am will precede the tournament sponsored chiefly by Grappa's, Bizhub C250 copiers, Pivo Praha Czech beer, Epson, Riso, Brother, Casio, Okamura, ServiceMaster, Terminix, Bravo Golf and Merry Maids.

For inquiries, call the NGAP at 525-6987, 524-5160 and 521-158; or The Riviera at 888-9127, (046) 414-2868, (046) 414-2837 and 888-9094.

Pinoys bag 2 Para golds

THE PHILIPPINES COLLECTED a 2-5-10 gold-silver-bronze medal haul for its best finish in the Asian Paralympic Games, the quadrennial meet held less than a week after the Doha Asian games.

Pentathlete Juanito Mingarine and swimmer Daniel Damaso ruled their respective events to lead the 40-member Philippine contingent.

"We actually won medals in all the events we competed in," said Mike Barredo, president of the Philippine Sports Association for Differently Abled (Philspada), during yesterday's Scoop session at the Kamayan Restaurant in Padre Faura.

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Peso ends year up 7.6% against the dollar

Friday close of 49.03 highest in nearly 6 years

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE PESO ENDED 2006 ON A HIGH NOTE ALONGSIDE favorable economic prospects and a seasonal surge in overseas remittances, gaining 7.6 percent or about P4 since the start of the year to close at 49.03 to a dollar yesterday.

During the year's last trading day, the local currency hit an intra-day peak of 49.02, its strongest in nearly six years, before closing at 49.03 or up by 7 centavos from Thursday's finish of 49.10 against the greenback.

The Philippines' decision to pre-empt a post-program monitoring

(PPM) arrangement with the International Monetary Fund with the prepayment of remaining debts with the Fund also contributed to the upbeat market sentiment.

"The peso continued to gain ground versus the US dollar following actual and PESO/B2

IN THIS ISSUE

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■ **S&P says debt ratios key to credit-rating upgrade /B8**

■ **BIR extends program for delinquent taxpayers to Jan. 31 /B8**

December inflation seen below 4.7%

INFLATION LIKELY SOFTENED FURTHER IN December from the 4.7 percent rate posted in November, aided by the appreciating peso and the stabilizing petroleum prices, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the inflation rate for the last month of the year likely tapered off to a low of 4.2 percent and, at worst, at 4.8 percent.

"Actual inflation in December is expected to be slightly lower compared to November due to the subsiding base effects alongside the continued strengthening of the peso and stable retail prices of domestic petroleum products," Tetangco said.

The country's inflation rate during the first 11 months of the year averaged at 6.4 percent, lower than the 7.7 percent a year ago.

"The decelerating inflation allowed the BSP to keep its policy rates unchanged at 7.5 percent (for overnight borrowing) and 9.75 percent (for overnight lending) in 2006, after a round of policy-tightening measures in 2005," Tetangco said in a year-end report.

"The BSP adopted a tiering scheme on banks' placements with the BSP in November to encourage banks to free up excess funds for lending and spur business activity," he said.

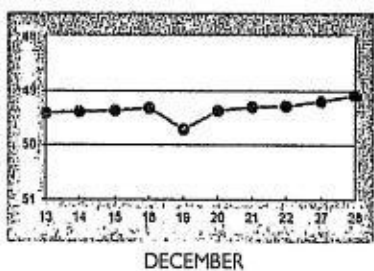
Tiering is a system wherein the BSP pays a lower rate on short-term money placed by banks in excess of certain threshold levels to encourage banks to lend out instead of park all their funds with the monetary authority.

Under this system, only the first P5 billion of short-term money placed with the BSP will be paid the overnight borrowing rate (currently at 7.5 percent). The next P5 billion will earn 200 basis points less than the published rate (5.5 percent) and placements in excess of P10 billion will yield 400 basis points less (3.5 percent).

The BSP earlier announced an inflation rate target of 4 percent in 2008, sustaining the ex-

DECEMBER/B2

INDICATORS CURRENCIES

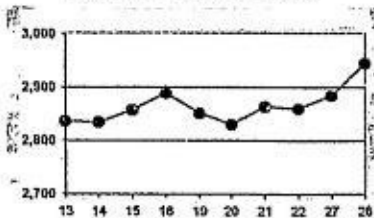


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 49.03 = \$

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 29, 2006

STOCK MARKET PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

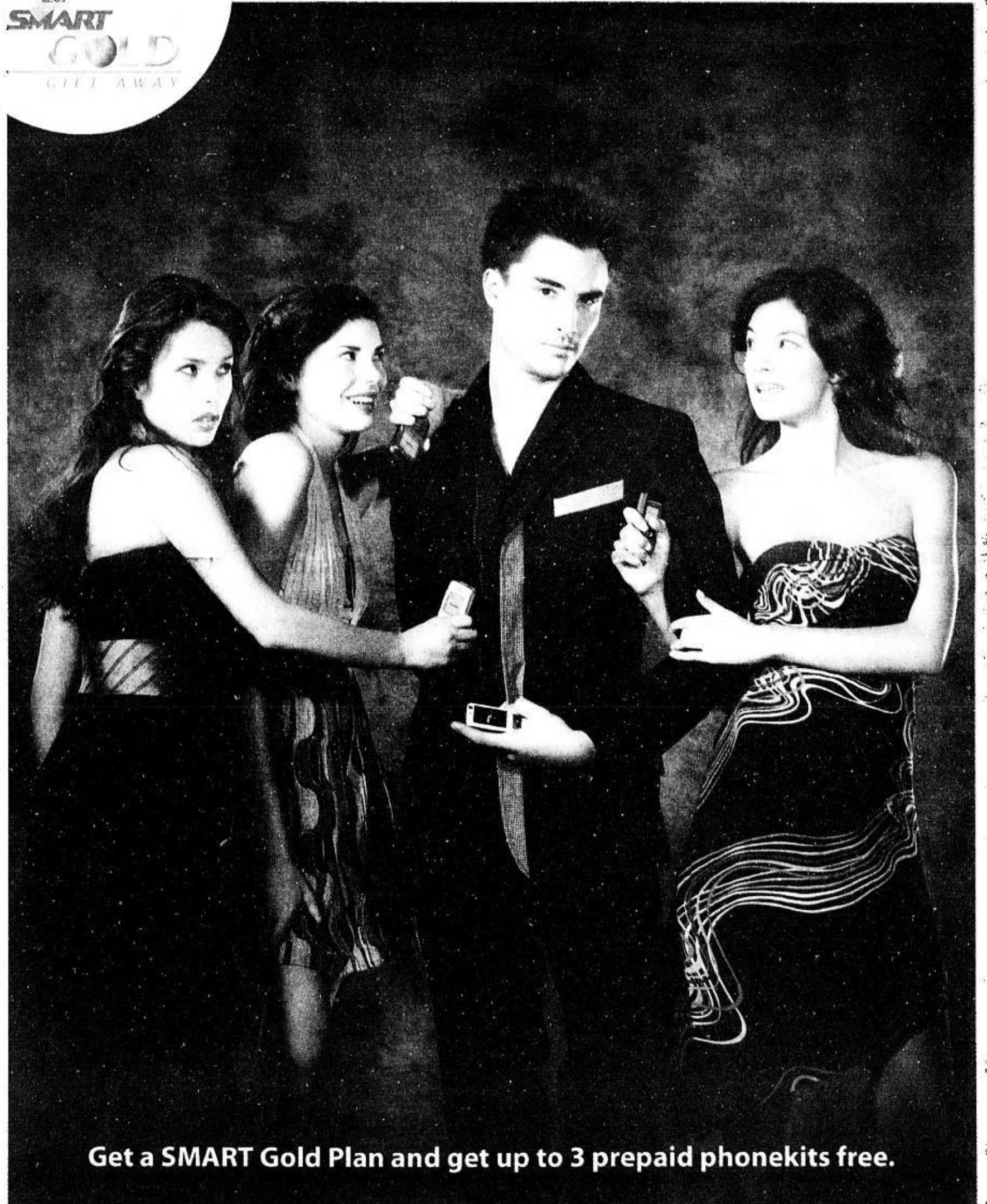
Shares close higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.33-PERCENT higher yesterday for the best finish in almost 10 years due to continued bullishness over the economic prospects for 2007, dealers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 39.16 points to close at the day's high of 2,982.54. It earlier hit a low of 2,948.55 points.

This was its best finish since April 7, 1997 when it settled at 2,990.96. (See story on Page 1.) AFP

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PLAN 1200	Nokia 6020/6070	Nokia 1110i	Nokia 1110i	N/A
PLAN 1800	Nokia 6151 Nokia 6233	Nokia 1600 Nokia 1110i	Nokia 1600 Nokia 1110i	Nokia 1600 Nokia 1110i
PLAN 2500	Nokia E61 Nokia N70	Nokia 1600 Nokia 1600	Nokia 1600 Nokia 1600	Nokia 1600 Nokia 1600
PLAN 3500	Nokia N73 Sony Ericsson K800i	Nokia 6020/6070 Nokia 6020/6070	Nokia 1800 Nokia 1800	Nokia 1600 Nokia 1600

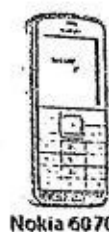
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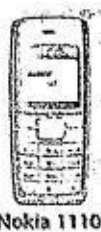
Nokia 6070

FREE



Nokia 1110i

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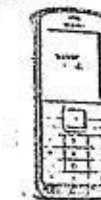
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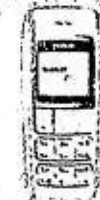
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Gov't to tap local market for funds

Coca-Cola unit sold for \$590M, says SMC

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SOUTHEAST ASIA'S LARGEST food and beverage firm San Miguel Corp. said it had sold its entire 65-percent stake in its soft drinks unit to the Coca-Cola Company for \$590 million.

The sale has been previously announced, but the amount of the deal was not disclosed.

In its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) yesterday, San Miguel said it had decided to let go of its soft drinks and distilled water businesses under Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. so that it could attain "longer-term commercial flexibility."

CCBPI is the holding firm for nonalcoholic beverage company Philippine Beverage Partners Inc., and Cosmos Bottling Corp., the manufacturer of local soft drink brands.

The transaction amount of \$590 million is subject to adjustments: The completion of the closing accounts of the CCBPI Group of Companies, and the compliance by San Miguel and the Coca-Cola Company with the provisions of a "transition service agreement" and a "cooperation agreement."

Both San Miguel and Coca-Cola have agreed to a transition service agreement whereby San Miguel will continue to provide services to Coca-Cola for a maximum of 18 months to enable the world's largest soft drinks maker to assume management of CCBPI.

Also, under the cooperation agreement, San Miguel has committed not to produce for itself and for certain competitors of Coca-Cola nonalcoholic drinks anywhere in the world for 3 years from the close of the deal, and for 5 years in the Philippines.

Despite its exit, San Miguel still continues to produce beverages through its other investments in Berri Ltd. and Del Monte Pacific Ltd. *With a report from Reuters*

P63B in securities to be issued in 1st quarter of '07

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT will borrow P63 billion from the domestic capital market in the first quarter of 2007, through the issuance of government securities, to help fund its expenditure requirements next year.

Borrowings of the government are used to pay off maturing obligations and fund programs and projects that could not be covered by revenue collection.

The borrowing program for the first quarter of next year will be 5 percent less than the P66.317 billion recorded in the same period for 2006.

The Bureau of the Treasury said that of the total domestic borrowings programmed for the first three months of next year, P24 billion will be raised through the sale of T-bills, while the remaining P39 billion will come in the form of T-bond sale.

T-bills are short-term government securities with maturities of one year or less, while T-bonds have longer tenors.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the government would issue more T-bonds and less T-bills next year, due to the market's preference

for higher yielding debt instruments.

Under the first quarter borrowing schedule, auctions for T-bills will be held every other Wednesday starting Jan. 10.

The government will issue P500 million worth of 91-day T-bills, P1.5 billion worth of 182-day T-bills, and P2 billion worth of P364-day T-bills every auction date.

Auctions for T-bonds will be held every other Thursday starting Jan. 18.

The government will issue P6 billion worth of 10-year bonds on Jan. 18; P6 billion worth of 3-year bonds on Feb. 1; P6 billion worth of 5-year bonds on Feb. 15; P7 billion worth of 7-year bonds on March 1; P7 billion worth of 10-year bonds on March 15, and P7 billion worth of 20-year bonds on March 29.

The domestic borrowing program for the first quarter of 2007 will be part of the P260.1 billion worth of total domestic borrowings intended for the entire year.

Next year, the government plans to borrow a total of P390.8 billion.

Apart from the P260.1 billion in domestic borrowings, the government has also set a foreign borrowing program worth P130.7 billion (or

\$2.5 billion).

The domestic and foreign borrowings for 2007 translates to a borrowing sources mix of 33:67 in favor of domestic sources.

The government has adopted the policy of borrowing more from the domestic capital market to minimize exposure to foreign exchange risks brought about by fluctuations of the exchange rate.

Next year's domestic borrowing program of P260.1 billion will be 5-percent higher than the estimated domestic borrowing of P247 billion this year. On the other hand, next year's \$2.5 billion worth of foreign borrowing program will be 37.5-percent lower than the estimated \$4 billion this year.

"The full-year borrowing program of the national government (for 2007) is less (than that of 2006), given the decline in the programmed deficit for 2007," The BTI said.

The government has set a deficit ceiling of only P63 billion for next year, lower than the projected P80 billion to P90 billion for 2006. The expected decline in the deficit is attributed to a projected increase in revenue collection and tighter spending.

Singapore gov't firm gets 6.3% stake in PNOC-EDC

THE GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE Investment Corp. Pte. Ltd. (GIC) yesterday said it had acquired a 6.28-percent stake in energy firm and new market debenture PNOC Energy Development Corp.

In a report, GIC said that it now owns 917.48 million PNOC-EDC shares.

GIC is a global investment management firm which the Government of Singapore established in 1981 for the country's foreign reserves.

With a network of seven offices in key financial capitals around the world, GIC invests in equities, fixed income, foreign exchange, commodities, money markets, alternative investments, real estate and private equity, according to the company's website.

PNOC-EDC, closed at P4.85

yesterday. The firm this year conducted the biggest initial public offer at the local stock exchange.

Last Dec. 4, GIC participated in PNOC-EDC's IPO for a total of 806.81 million shares at P3.20 a share. On Dec. 13, GIC also bought 105.72 million shares at P4.33 apiece.

PNOC-EDC's stock rose sharply on its trading debut. It jumped to as high as P4.55 in early deals compared with its offer price of P3.20. PNOC-EDC saw its shares soaring 41 percent, raising \$337 million in funds during the IPO.

The geothermal power producer, a unit of state-owned Philippine National Oil Co., listed up to P14.6 billion in shares after raising P16.7 billion from its IPO of up to 5.2 billion primary and secondary shares.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Sun Life records robust growth

SUN LIFE FINANCIAL PHILIPPINES recorded robust growth in all its business lines in 2006.

In a statement, the company said its pre-need, asset management and life insurance businesses moved up in their respective ranking over the past 12 months.

From 12th place in the pre-need industry 18 months ago, Sun Life Financial Plans Inc. (SLFPI) had posted steady growth, eventually snatching the top position from the previous leader by August this year.

In terms of "initial cash brought in" (ICBI), SLFPI grabbed market leadership that month with a 25-percent market share.

The company also said it had garnered the highest "persistence score among all pre-need companies in 2006 at 86.5 percent, based on data gathered and compiled by the Actuarial Society of the Philippines."

Persistence scores measure the percentage of clients who completed their first year premium payments and continued to pay their premiums on the second year of their terms. The industry's average persistence rating is 72 percent.

Sun Life's mutual fund company, Sun Life Asset Management Co., placed second in terms of gross sales this year. SLAMC is now managing assets worth P11 billion, up from P7 billion as of end-2005.

While the company's life insurance business continues to be a strong second in its sector, sales of Sun Life of Canada Philippines Inc. during the entire year grew significantly over last year's level. For November alone, SLOCPI's sales force registered a performance that delivered 103 percent of its target in terms of agency credits, the company said.

Sun Life Financial Plans is a member of the Sun Life Financial group of companies, a leading international financial services organization. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of December 29, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH FINANCIAL BANKS	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.4	31,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	46.5	46.5	46	46	235,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	63	63.5	63	63.5	561,700
China Banking Corp.	690	690	680	680	32,500
Citibank Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	600
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.48	0.48	0.47	0.47	4,130,000
Equitable Pcl Bank Inc.	83	84	81.5	83	93,400
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	51.5	51.5	51	51.5	674,700
Philippine National Bank	44	44.5	44	44	79,600
Phil. Savings Bank	48	48	48	48	2,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	24.75	24.75	24	24	116,200
Security Bank Corp.	65.5	65.5	65	65.5	70,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	49	50	49	49	12,100
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Atr Kimeng Fin. Corp.	1.96	2.08	1.96	2.08	281,000
Bankard Inc.	0.78	0.8	0.78	0.8	1,000,000
Citicorincom Inc.	5.4	5.6	5.3	5.6	450,000
First Abacus Financial	0.74	0.8	0.7	0.79	1,230,000
First Metro Invest. Corp	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1650	1650	1650	1650	10,000
Pcl Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	400,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	280	280	280	280	500
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2040	2045	2040	2045	690
Union Bank Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.64	1.66	7,323,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
Phoc Energy Dev. Corp.	4.8	4.95	4.8	4.85	235,243,000
First Gen Corp.	56	56.5	56	56.5	981,300
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	63.5	63.5	63	63	270,700
Manila Electric Co. A	54.5	54.5	53.5	54	188,800
Manila Electric Co. B	55	56	54.5	55	493,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.6	9.6	9.4	9.4	4,645,000
Petron Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.05	4.1	1,819,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	660,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.12	1.14	1.12	1.14	726,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	27,000
Capri Group Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	40,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.25	21	20.25	21	32,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	42.5	42.5	41	42	895,100
Pancake House Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.2	6.3	12,000
Rim Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	130,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.7	2.7	95,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	40,000
San Miguel Corp. A	66.5	67.5	66.5	67.5	124,000
San Miguel Corp. B	74.5	77.5	74.5	77.5	385,800
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.12	2.14	2.1	2.1	476,000
Universal Robina Corp.	19.25	19.25	19	19.25	969,400
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1	1.02	0.99	0.99	8,130,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	391,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	6,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.7	7.8	1,466,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.3	6.3	32,000
Republic Cement Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.95	3.95	123,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrep Technologies Inc	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.4	7,719,000
Maubury Vinyl Corp.	0.6	0.64	0.6	0.64	100,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.71	0.73	0.7	0.71	16,750,000
Macondray Plastics Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	5,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.2	0.205	0.195	0.2	9,760,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.008	19,000,000
Ayala Corp.	580	590	575	590	241,950
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.64	0.66	0.64	0.65	350,000
Abolito Equity Ventures	7	7.1	7	7	318,000
Alliance Global Group Inc	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.5	49,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	3,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.85	2.85	2.8	2.85	230,000
Age Group Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.37	2,270,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	28,500,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.14	1.16	1.12	1.12	1,920,000
Bapulo Gold Holdings Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.1	77,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	8,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.4	9.7	9.4	9.7	5,243,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.22	2.22	2.14	2.16	9,788,000
Dmci Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6.1	1,557,000
Filinvest Corp.	3.6	3.65	3.6	3.65	2,340,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	1	1	0.9	0.9	80,000
F&J Prince Hldgs B	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	10,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.25	0.27	0.25	0.26	2,280,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	381,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc	10.5	11	10.5	11	1,824,800
Medco Holdings	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	1,660,000
Magnum Holdings Inc	3.85	3.85	3.6	3.6	128,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.58	1.62	1.54	1.54	653,000
Pacific	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	10,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	100,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	20,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.7	49,000
Solid Gold Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	1,100,000
Sinophill Corp.	0.155	0.16	0.155	0.16	430,000
Sm Investments Corp.	330	330	320	325	33,600
South China Resources Inc	0.98	0.98	0.97	0.97	100,000
Unilab Res. & Holdings Co	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.29	4,970,000
Wellux Industries Inc.	0.12	0.135	0.12	0.13	170,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.5	15.5	15	15.25	1,454,600
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	130,000
Belle Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.12	7,917,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.58	1.64	1.58	1.58	1,088,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.42	0.43	0.42	0.42	5,950,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.2	94,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	60,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	20,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	1,500,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.54	0.55	0.53	0.54	18,560,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	110,000
Ever-Goteco Resources	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	1,100,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.14	2.16	2.1	2.14	25,215,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.5	42,000
Interport Res.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	8,000,000
Kepel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	10,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	1,860,000
City & Land Developers	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.6	28,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.63	0.64	0.63	0.64	2,060,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.015	2,500,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.38	2.42	2.36	2.42	57,162,000
Microl Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.8	5	4.7	5	373,000
Micr Allied Ind. Inc.	0.38	0.39	0.37	0.38	1,010,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	440,000
Polar Property Holdings	16	16.25	15.75	16.25	2,069,200
Robinsons Land Corp.	0.66	0.67	0.65	0.66	2,650,000
Sm Development Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.65	2.65	1,556,000
Sm Prime Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.25	10.5	10.75	3,690,200
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.56	0.59	0.56	0.59	150,000
Unilux Holdings Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.105	0.105	2,910,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	20.5	20.5	20.25	20.25	25,800
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	50,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	1.94	1.96	1.9	1.96	11,264,000
Digital Telecom Inc.	1240	1245	1235	1235	31,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.7	6.9	6.6	6.9	7,399,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2460	2570	2460	2550	158,000
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.19	0.19	10,800,000
Imperial Res.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	34,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	626,000
Iwag Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.7	3.85	626,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	3,400,000
Ism Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	1,939,000
Transpacific Broadband	1.8	2	1.8	1.88	1,939,000
Philweb Corp.	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	22,400,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.1	4	4.1	112,000
Abolito Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	340,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	20.25	20.75	20.25	20.75	150,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	150,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Grand Plaza Hotel Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	3,485,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	3,400,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.58	0.6	0.58	0.6	3,400,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	9.3	9.4	9.1	9.3	308,000
Far Eastern University	810	810	810	810	150,000
Ipsoc Inc	3.05	3.1	3.05	3.1	150,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.12	2.14	2.08	2.1	185,000
Paxys Inc	19.75	19.75	19.5	19.75	1,288,000
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc	40	50	40	50	7,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc A	6	6.1	6	6	683,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	6.2	6.22	6	6	175,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	47,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.9	9.9	9.7	9.7	2,158,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.5	9.5	9.3	9.3	75,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3	3	2.9	3	91,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	5,330,000
Asiatic Cons. Mng. Co B	0.28	0.28	0.26	0.27	5,330,000
Manila Mining Corp A	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.024	501,500
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	545,700
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	795,800
Philrex Mining Corp.	4.05	4.15	4.05	4.05	7,721,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	18.5	18.5	18.25	18.25	15,000
Unitra Exploration Mining Co.	0.73	0.73	0.71	0.72	1,458,000
Vulcan Int'l	1.46	1.46	1.38	1.4	1,458,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.28	9,030,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	19,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	362,400
The Philodil Corp. A	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.04	1,140,000
Phoc Exploration Corp.-B	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	1,140,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	24	24	23	23	1,140,000

Asian stocks rise; crude oil steadies above \$60

SINGAPORE—ASIAN SHARE markets were mostly higher on Friday, the last trading day of 2006, while oil held above \$60 a barrel after rising on a steeper-than-expected fall in US crude stocks.

The dollar steadied against the euro and yen after a series of surprisingly strong US data painted a more robust picture of the economy.

Tokyo's Nikkei share average finished just 0.01 percent higher at 17,225.83, but that was still its highest close since early May.

It ended with a 6.9 percent gain on the year—its fourth straight year of growth and its longest bull run in nearly two decades.

Nikkei ends with 4th year of growth; Australia hits record

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 index rose 0.2 percent to end at a record high for the third day in a row.

"The market has, as a whole, just run with the weight of money and the private equity theme, and those two factors should continue into the early part of next year," said Robert Hook, a portfolio manager with S.G. Hiscock & Co.

Financial bookmakers are expecting London's FTSE 100 and the CAC 40 in Paris to open about three points higher, with Germany's DAX between two points

lower and six points higher.

US stocks finished marginally lower on Thursday as investors sold off recent outperforming stocks to lock in profits.

The Dow Jones industrial average declined 0.07 percent to end at 12,501.52 and the tech-laden Nasdaq Composite Index ended 0.23 percent lower at 2,425.57.

Oil had climbed 19 cents on Wednesday after weekly oil data showed an 8.1 million barrel drop in US commercial crude stocks last week, mostly due to

delayed deliveries to refiners on the Texas and Louisiana coasts amid foggy weather.

The front-month contract now stands about 1 percent lower than it did at the start of the year, its first annual decline since dropping from \$26.80 to below \$20 a barrel during 2001.

Prices soared by 34 percent in 2004 and 41 percent last year.

Gold edged down to \$634 an ounce on light profit-taking ahead of the year-end holidays, but it held near three-week highs

as lingering worries over Iran's nuclear ambitions led to fresh buying by investment funds.

The US currency steadied after a trio of economic reports on consumer confidence, midwest business activity and existing home sales showed the world's largest economy may be in better shape than thought.

"It is rather puzzling that market participants are not buying the dollar much despite the strong data," said a trader at a big Japanese bank.

The euro edged up to 156.54

yen, near a record high of 156.73 yen hit on Thursday.

Japanese government bonds eased for the third straight session, weighed down by weak Treasuries and the risk that the Bank of Japan may raise interest rates next month.

Taiwan's main TAIEX share index ended 1.17 percent higher, ignoring an interest rate rise by the central bank the previous day. Singapore's Straits Times Index was up 0.3 percent by 0620 GMT.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index eased 0.2 percent in afternoon trade, with investors locking in profits from a protracted rally in mainland Chinese stocks.

Reuters

IMF cautions investors on growth risks

WASHINGTON—GLOBAL ECONOMIC growth is on a solid track but still faces risks, the IMF said on Wednesday, cautioning that the apparent complacency of many investors could trigger a market upset if something caused them to take fright.

"Market sentiment has gravitated toward a central scenario for a benign slowdown which keeps inflationary pressures contained," the International Monetary Fund said in an update to its bi-annual Global Financial Stability Report.

"But downside risks remain and there have been changes in underlying financial conditions that warrant continued vigilance," the IMF said.

It noted debt leverage levels have grown at private equity funds, while hedge funds that sold financial options may be exposed to sudden market swings.

By and large, though, the outlook was encouraging. US growth has slowed as the housing market has cooled.

But there appears to have been little spillover from this to the rest of the economy, while activity abroad has gathered pace.

On the other hand, a sharp fall in volatility levels in financial markets, as well as a concentration of risk as investors adopt similar trading strategies, could be storing up trouble for the future.

"Investors appear to be giving insufficient weight to downside risks and might assume that the low risk premia are a permanent feature of the financial market landscape," it said.

In particular, IMF economists worried that cyclical factors might be adding to the low levels of volatility, which could reverse with potentially disruptive consequences.

"A volatility shock—perhaps caused by a downward shift in growth expectations or by renewed inflationary pressures—could precipitate portfolio adjustments and raise underlying volatility," the IMF said.

Reuters

Emerging markets set for healthy returns in 2007

LONDON—A SLOWING GLOBAL economy will erode but not eliminate bumper emerging market returns next year, with the uncertain US economic outlook likely to cause some ups and downs in risk appetite.

Given rising US, euro zone and Japanese interest rates, 2006 was a stellar year.

JP Morgan's sovereign bond index EMBI+ shows spreads over US Treasuries at record narrow levels, with returns around 10 percent in dollar terms.

On equities, Morgan Stanley's emerging index is also near a record high.

"Our view is that emerging markets will have another good year in 2007 but there are enough uncertainties out there to make it volatile from time to time," said Sarah Hewin, senior economist at the American Express Bank in London.

Hewin said a soft US landing, the continued Japanese and euro zone upswing and steady growth in most

emerging markets, would keep the global backdrop benign, but she warned: "People are unsure which way the Fed will move and that means we will see some choppiness going forward."

Andrew Howell, Citigroup head of emerging equities, expects EMEA stocks to return 15 percent next year versus 25 percent in 2006 and 15-20 percent returns in Latin America thanks to decent global growth, ample liquidity and still-reasonable valuations.

"We are thus willing to call for an unprecedented fifth year of gains in emerging markets," he said.

Analysts also predict a continued boom in local currency debt which carries higher risk but offers double-digit yields.

Over 60 percent of trade is now in the local segment.

Potential risk factors next year could be anything from a US recession—still seen as unlikely—to higher Japanese interest rates that would trigger the un-

winding of carry trades.

A significant economic slowdown could hit commodities, key for many developing states.

"I think the single biggest risk is the unwinding of leverage and there is a fair amount of that in the system," said Kaushik Rudra, strategist at Lehman Brothers in London.

Interest rates of just 0.25 percent makes yen the currency of choice to fund overseas high-yield investments but a hawkish Bank of Japan sent tremors through the carry trade this year.

"Clearly, G7 markets pose the risk and it's probably going to be a factor one is not focused on," Rudra said.

Most argue that the limited extent of the US slowdown will keep the impact light while the Fed rate cuts expected from the middle of 2007 should unleash liquidity and support markets.

A more bearish view is of a global downturn, with Asian and the euro zone growth insufficient to counteract US weakness.

In some ways the 2007 outlook may be less challenging than at the end of last year when US and euro zone interest rates looked set to rise much further. Most believe now that US rates have peaked and euro zone rates do not have far to go.

While the BOJ is seen raising rates by 50 bps, most feel this is priced in and will not rock the carry trade boat.

The danger may in fact lie in huge overweight positions within emerging markets even if the trigger comes from outside.

The sector is now crowded with heavily leveraged investors, many of whom have been lured into emerging markets for the first time recently.

Contagion and domino-effect selling may be in the past but the events of May and June showed how investors, burned in one market, will cash out even from stable countries to protect profits. Emerging markets suffered a hefty selloff on fears that global interest rates could rise faster and further than expected.

Reuters



CHICAGO White Sox second baseman Tadahito Iguchi (right) rings the bell to mark the closing of stock trading for 2006 at the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo. Japanese stocks edged upward Friday to wrap up a turbulent 2006. The benchmark Nikkei 225 stock index closed at 17,225.83 points on the Tokyo Stock Exchange Friday morning, up 1.02 points, or 0.01 percent, from Thursday. Financial Services Minister Yuji Yamamoto is at center.

5 years of the euro: Expensive coffee or economic boon?

PARIS—FIVE YEARS AFTER THE introduction of euro bills and coins, many Europeans appear more concerned about the perceived increase in the cost of their coffee than the supposed economic benefits for the continent.

Public support for the single currency has fallen since its launch in cash form on Jan. 1, 2002, when 304 million Europeans swapped their national currencies for a common means of exchange.

Seen as an important step toward deeper European integration, the vast initiative was sold to citizens on its economic merits, promising higher growth and protection from the currency crises that had regularly hit the continent.

Five years on however, many blame the euro for raising the cost of living, particularly prices for coffee and beer, accusing shopkeepers and service providers of using confusion created by the currency as an opportunity to hike their prices.

In Germany, controversy about the "Teuro," a play on the German word for expensive—teuer—continues.

The European Central Bank has done its utmost to rebut claims of higher prices and the Frankfurt-based institution points to the stable level of inflation, which has remained at slightly more than 2.0 percent over the period.

The bank has been at pains to stress that increases in the costs of en-

Public support for currency has fallen since '02

ergy and real estate are not connected to the euro and that prices for some goods have actually fallen, in the high-tech sector for example.

However the European Central Bank has recently become a target for criticism itself, particularly from French politicians, amid a debate about the strength of the euro against the dollar and the yen.

The indifference, or even animosity, felt toward the euro might also be attributed to the difficulty of explaining the wider economic benefits of the currency.

Its introduction was seen as a way to reduce damaging exchange rate fluctuations in Europe, providing greater stability for companies and investors.

It also helped complete the European single market, aimed at raising competition between national companies and boosting economic growth.

Furthermore, the euro has led to lower long-term interest rates because confidence in the system and the credibility of the European Central Bank have enabled governments to issue bonds at lower rates of interest.

Lower long-term interest rates lead to lower short-term interest rates, which in turn mean a lower cost of

credit for consumers. Lower long-term rates also mean that European governments are paying less to borrow money.

On the political front, the euro was once seen as being a catalyst for deeper integration, but the process of bringing member states into a closer political union has foundered in recent times.

Although the European Union has expanded since its introduction, welcoming 10 new members in 2004, the rejection of the European Constitution by French and Dutch voters in 2005 was a setback for the EU project.

There are also signs that the allure of the euro has fallen for candidate countries.

Slovenia is set to become the 13th member of the eurozone on Jan. 1, but other new EU members are now showing less enthusiasm than before for jettisoning their national currencies.

Economic progress has also been slow, with many governments backing away from structural reforms of their economies and growth of gross domestic product has been far lower than the United States in recent years.

The Lisbon Agenda, launched in 2000 to turn the European economy into the most competitive in the world, has withered and has since been watered down.

In any case, though the coins and notes have long since disappeared, there are signs that national currencies live on in the minds of consumers. AFP

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Detailed information at:

For more details contact us at:

www.grailmessage.com

mail@grail-asia.net

Contact: Evelyn Aurelio Tel.: 9950507
Mobile: 0910 6251146

Published by Stiftung Gralsbotschaft, Stuttgart, Germany



"He will wipe every tear from their eyes,
and there shall be no more death..."

Rev 21:4

ANTONIO BERNARDO RAMOS

has joined his beloved wife
Ma. Margarita Arellano Ramos
on December 29, 2006.

He leaves treasured memories in the hearts of his children **Gari, Tonji and Sylvia, Jinny and Henry, Joey and Rhea, Monette and Lawrence,** and **Ojai.**

He will be deeply missed by his grandchildren **Sam, Matt, Nick, Pat, Monica, Franco, Kat, Enzo, Mara, Mikaela, Raffi and Zach.**

He will always be remembered by his siblings, cousins, nephews and nieces and close friends.

His remains will lie in state at the Family Chapel in #1 Alta Vista Drive, Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

He will be interred tomorrow, December 31st at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Sta. Maria Della Strada Parish Church, Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City.

GIOVANNI CASIS ONG, M.D., FPCCP

of Ibayay, Aklan
and former Director of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center
(VMMC)

Peacefully joined his Creator on December 27, 2006 at the age of 72.

His bereaved wife **Gregoria**; children **Jude & Nerissa, Giovanni Jr. & Maria Luz, Georgina & Kerwin, John & Stella, Ian & Joy and Kristina**; grandchildren **Joshua, Nico, Zach, Ian, Anton, Luis; Gabriel, Angela; Patty, Nikki, Luigi; Matthew, Patrick, Kevin**; sister and brothers, and all relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Valdez Hall, at VMMC.

Interment will be on January 3, 2007 at Himayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora, Quezon City right after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at VMMC Chapel.

Our Dearly
Beloved

ERNESTO C. ROJAS

(January 16, 1940 - December 28, 2006)

Has peacefully joined our Lord on
December 28, 2006 at the age of 66.

His loving wife **Dedette**; children **Gino, Jon & Faye**; brothers **Noel, Rico, Ed & Emer** and all relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in prayers for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at Santuario de San Antonio, Capilla del Señor, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Cremation will be tomorrow, December 31, 2006 at the Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio following the 7:00 a.m. Mass.

An obituary with
a picture can be
a fitting tribute
to your departed loved one.

Always caring...

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

- ① Copy of Death Certificate
- ② Any identification document (I.D.)

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In Loving Memory of

HONORIO A. TANQUINTIC

on his 100th Birth Anniversary

Born: December 30, 1906
Died: December 23, 1966

His children **Luz & Berting (T) dela Cruz, Minda (T) & Ody Indiongco, Fermin & Lery (T) Tanquintic, Amado & Emily Tanquintic, Amelia & Roque Cesista,** and **Jovita & Jose Salazar**; and grandchildren have offered the following Masses:

- Ascension of Our Lord Parish - Lugo Subd., Quezon City 6:30 AM
- St. Peter Parish - Commonwealth Ave., Quezon City 7:00 PM
- Sta. Clara Parish Church - P. Burgos St., Pasay City 8:00 AM & 6:00 PM
- Sta. Lucia Parish Church - Nardines, Quezon City 8:00 AM
- Parish of the Holy Sacrifice - U.P. Campus, Quezon City 6:00 AM
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish - Project 6, Quezon City 6:00 AM
- Immaculate Conception Parish Church - Poblacion, Sta. Maria, Bulacan 6:30 AM
- St. John the Evangelist Parish - Bugtungan, Sta. Maria, Bulacan 6:30 PM
- Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish - Palang Bulangin, Sta. Maria, Bulacan 6:00 AM
- Santissimo Sacramento Parish - Cuy-Pumban, Sta. Maria, Bulacan 6:30 AM
- St. Andrew Parish - Norzagaray, Bulacan 6:00 AM
- Sta. Monica Parish - Poblacion, Argao, Bulacan 6:00 AM
- St. Peter Parish - Tungkong Mangga, San Jose del Monte City, Bulacan 6:30 AM

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The family of the late

TRINIDAD SABAS FLORES

acknowledges with sincere gratitude
the heartfelt prayers, words of consolation,
cards, visits and generousities extended
to us during the illness and passing
of our loved one.

It is our sincere prayer that God will bless you
and keep you all in His care.

"For God so loved the world, that
He gave His only begotten Son, that
whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

You are gone...
But for us you never left...
GOD has you in His keeping
We have you in our hearts... FOREVER!

Our Loving Daddy

JESUS C. TORDESILLAS, SR.

Peacefully joined our Creator on December 28, 2006
at the age of 83.

His loving wife, **Fely** and children **Jake, Tere & Nonoy Orense, Honey & Rico Tirona, Boy & Pinky**; grandchildren **Mico, Nadine, Jessica, Corinne, Chico, Mark, Aljon** and great grandchild **Ezekiel**, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at St. Martin de Porres Church, United Hills Village, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on December 31, 2006 at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 8 a.m. Mass.

CLASSIFIEDS



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s.

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
FIELD SERVICES CORPORATION Blk. 2 Lot 4248 Fastrack Road, Brgy. Moonwalk, Parañaque City	Hiroshi Iwata	President
OBAYASHI CORPORATION 10/F, Chatham House Condominium, V.A. Rufino cor. Valero Sts., Saicedo Village, Makati City	Ryoichi Ishizuka	Senior Site Engineer
CJS UNO TRAVEL AND TOURS CORP. 5B Osmeña Bldg., 1991 A. Mabini St., Malate, Manila	Gyeong Woo Jang	Marketing Officer
NEW GEN KIMS FAMILY CORPORATION 5059 P. Burgos St., Poblacion, Makati City	Ka Jo Kim	Assistant Manager
OHSUNG TRAVEL & TOURS AGENCY, INC. U-13, 8137 Plaza J., Escrivá Drive, Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Eunmi Lee	Manager
G.N.K. ENTERPRISES CORPORATION 62 Nadurata St., Maypajo, Caloocan City	Nilouffer Mohamed Khaleel	Marketing Director and Finance Director

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

(Sgd.) ERNESTO C. BIHIS
Regional Director

(PDI - December 30, 2006)

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List of Vacant Positions (In Compliance with RA 7041)

Position / Salary Grade / Item No/s. & Minimum Qualification

CHIEF SCIENCE RESEARCH SPECIALIST / SG 24 /
Item # 102 & 272; PhD in relevant field of specialization; or MS degree in relevant field of specialization, 6 yrs. of productive R&D experience beyond master's degree; CS Prof; 24 hrs. of training in management & supervision

CHIEF ACCOUNTANT / SG 24 / Item # 46;
Masteral degree; 4 years in position/s involving management and supervision; 24 hrs. of training in management & supervision; Eligibility: RA 1080 (CPA)

ACCOUNTANT IV / SG 22 / Item # 47;
Bachelor's degree relevant to the job; 3 yrs. relevant experience; 16 hours training; Eligibility: RA 1080 (CPA); Preferably with management/leadership experience.

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Department
of Energy
Page A22

NOTICE TO THE MOTORING PUBLIC

Pursuant to DOTC Department Orders 2005-34 and 2005-37, the DOTC/LTO is mandated to efficiently and effectively implement the emission standards for motor vehicles as provided by the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 through the implementation of the **PETC-ITF International Project**.

The PETC-ITF Interconnectivity Project allows the interconnection between the PETC's and the existing DOTC/LTO Information Technology System (DOTC/LTO IT System). With a three-way matching capability, the PETC-ITF Interconnectivity Project permits online authentication with the LTO-IT System which immediately locks the Certificate of Emission Compliance (CEC) number to the accredited testing centers and the motor vehicle record, which would subsequently prevent the re-issuance of the CEC to another motor vehicle.

Effective **JANUARY 2, 2007**, the public is strongly advised to have their motor vehicle emission test processed by DTI Accredited and DOTC/LTO Authorized PETCs that are connected online

and real time to the LTO-IT system and bearing this seal



REYNALDO T. BERROYA
Assistant Secretary

LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE



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(PDI - December 30, 31, 2006 & January 1, 2007)



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LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE
East Avenue, Quezon City
E-mail Address: ltoinbox@lto.gov.ph • Website: www.lto.gov.ph

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. RIB-2006-790

21 December 2006

TO : All Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors, and Heads of District Offices / Extension Offices and Other Officials and Employees Concerned, This Office

SUBJECT : Mandatory Validation of Emission Testing Results in the LTO IT Project's System Pursuant to Department Order Nos. 2005-34 and 2005-37, prescribing the rules and regulations governing the authorization of Private Emission Testing Centers (PETC) and PETC Information Technology (IT) Providers, all PETCs are required to be connected to the LTO-IT System on an online and real-time basis through their respective PETC-IT Providers allowing the verification of the emission test results at the LTO District Offices prior to motor vehicle registration.

With this, LTO officials and employees shall accept only emission test results that are verified and authenticated online, real-time under the DOTC/LTO-IT System effective January 2, 2007. The following are the guidelines in the processing of motor vehicle registration.

- The system will verify and accept only motor vehicles with "Passed" emission test results for renewal registration of "Private" and "Exempt Private" vehicles and if combined with any miscellaneous transaction, otherwise, a rejection letter will be generated.
- The system will not validate emission test results of other motor vehicle classifications and type of transactions;
- If the motor vehicle has no corresponding emission record, a rejection letter will be generated (See Annex A for sample);
- The system will only accept emission test results issued by the DOTC/LTO Authorized Private Emission Testing Centers (PETC) connected to the LTO-IT System online and real-time; otherwise, a rejection letter will be generated (See Annex B for the list of duly authorized PETC-IT Providers).

All orders/memoranda in conflict herewith are deemed superseded.
For strict compliance.

REYNALDO T. BERROYA
Assistant Secretary

(PDI - Dec. 30, 2006)



AFTER REPAIRING TRANSMISSION LINES HEAVILY damaged by typhoon Seniang, the National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) fielded a task force composed of 28 transmission linemen to help the Aklan Electric Cooperative (Akelco) repair their damaged wooden poles and distribution lines in Boracay island, the country's premiere tourist destination. Power restoration works were thus completed more quickly.



Republic of the Philippines
Province of Oriental Negros
Municipality of Sta. Catalina
Second Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project (ARCDP)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Rehabilitation of Kabulakan-San Miguel Farm to Market Road 8.58 kms.
Kabulakan-San Miguel Barangay Road
Loan 7152-PH.

December 30, 2006

The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has received a loan from The World Bank toward the cost of the Second Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project (ARCDP) and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan, together with the LGU counterpart funds, to payments under the contract for Rehabilitation of Kabulakan-San Miguel 8.58 kms Kabulakan-San Miguel Barangay Road under Contract Number RIRR 06 284 02 SDC-4.

The Municipality of Sta. Catalina Province of Oriental Negros now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Rehabilitation of Kabulakan-San Miguel 8.58 kms Farm to Market Road located at Brgys. Kabulakan and San Miguel Barangay Road under Contract No. RIRR 06 284 02 SDC-4 and is expected to be completed and delivered within 228 Calendar Days from the date of the official start of the subproject.

DESCRIPTION OF WORKS

Item No.	Description of Works	Quantity	Unit
10	Clearing and Grubbing	94,380	Sq. m.
12	Roadway & Drainage Excavation	27,307	Cu. m.
13	Excavation for Structure	158	Cu. m.
14(2)	Embankment (using borrow Materials)	6,732	Cu. m.
20	Aggregate Subbase Course	5,148	Cu. m.
21	Aggregate Base Course 5.148	Cu. m.	
31	PCCP (1.50 cu. m)	4000	Sq. m.
50-4	Installation 910 mm dia RCPC with headwalls	42	In. m.
51-2	Grouted Riprap with cement lining	1,200	Cu. m.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Subject to exceptions stated in this Bidding Documents, only Bids from Bidders who pass an eligibility check will be opened. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification. The Estimated Project Cost is P 12,435,384.07.

The documents required in the Eligibility Documents shall be submitted as part of the Technical Documents of the Bidders as provided in the Instruction to Bidders.

Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the LGU-BAC of Sta. Catalina and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on January 2, 2007 to February 02, 2007.

A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP5,000.00. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before 10:00 a.m. February 02, 2007.

The LGU-BAC of Sta. Catalina will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on January 19, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. at the following address Sangunian Bayan Session Hall, Municipality of Sta. Catalina.

Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before 10:00 a.m.

February 02, 2007. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of CASH MANAGER'S CHECK, CASHIER'S CHECK AND BANK GUARANTEE and in an amount of PHP 187,000.00 or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on 10:00 a.m., February 02, 2007 at the Sangunian Bayan Session Hall, Municipality of Sta. Catalina. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at the Sangunian Bayan Session Hall, Municipality of Sta. Catalina.

Minimum Equipment Required: Bulldozer (2 unit)(225-300HP)-owned; 1 Unit Vibratory Roller (10-12tons)-owned; Road Grader (2 unit)(125HP)-owned; Loader(1-3 Cu. M) (2 unit)-owned; Backhoe (1 unit) (75-1.5 cu. M)-owned; Dumptruck (5 units)-owned (5-10 cu.m); Water Truck (1 unit) (8,000 ltrs) owned; Soil Laboratory/Field testing Equipment - owned; Survey Instruments (leased/owned). Other documents include valid PCAB license, valid and current Mayor's permit, BIR tax Clearance and Dole Certification).

Completion of the Works is 228 Calendar Days from the official start of the subproject.

The LGU-BAC of Sta. Catalina, Oriental Negros reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

ARCDP-LGU-BAC Municipality of Sta. Catalina, Oriental Negros
ENGR. FILEMON B. IBAL, JR.
M.E. and ARCDP-LGU-BAC Chairman
Municipality of Sta. Catalina
Province of Oriental Negros
Telephone #: 035-531-0297

(Sgd.) ENGR. FILEMON B. IBAL, JR.
M.E. and ARCDP-LGU-BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI - Dec. 30, 2006)



Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632) 920-6401 • (632) 920-6446
E-mail: member_relations@sss.gov.ph • Web site: <http://www.sss.gov.ph>

NOTICE

Please get in touch with the Members Assistance Center, Social Security System (SSS), East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or at any SSS office nearest your place of residence and file your death benefit claim within 90 days upon publications, if you are:

NAME OF BENEFICIARIES	LAST KNOWN ADDRESS	NAME OF SSS MEMBER	DATE OF DEMISE
1) Lea del Valle	Fule Sahagun, San Pablo City	Blivenido B. Alvaran SS#04-0173293-5	April 16, 2006
2) Nanette A. Amper	Naredico, Camp Salangan, Quezon, Bukidnon	Amado Amper SS#03-2509050-1	August 30, 2006
3) Aristia B. Amisica	Bacolod City	Dionisio P. Aurelio SS#07-0788409-5	June 9, 2005
4) Norma	Unknown	Ruben Bael SS#03-1840541-9	September 8, 2001
5) Aurilla Revilla Beronio	Manay, Panabo, Davao del Norte	Lorenzo V. Beronio SS#09-0317154-4	August 21, 2006
6) Pasita Saganay, Busmente	San Francisco, Magarao, Camarines Sur	Rodolfo P. Busmente SS#05-0126693-2	May 28, 2006
7) Michael Angelo Sumatra	125 G.S. Daang Bakal St., Gitanang Bayan I, San Mateo, Rizal	Leonardo Cabal, Jr. SS#03-7059645-1	January 23, 2005
8) Ferdinand Castro	Sampaloc, Manila	Gina M. Castro SS#33-087650-7	September 5, 2006
9) Gloria C. Cunanan	Sto. Rosario, Magalang, Pampanga	Renato Cunanan SS#03-3467245-0	June 11, 2004
10) Maria Dizon	Unknown	Servando Dizon SS#03-2258750-2	July 6, 2004
11) Lucena C. Ducay	Cadaz, Negros Occidental	Fernando Ducay SS#07-0503522-8	October 5, 2005
12) Rogelio Esmena	Sorsogon, Sorsogon	Nilda Esmena SS#03-7509170-2	June 29, 2006
13) Pedro Estampa	Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur	Angelito B. Estampa SS#09-1711714-1	July 24, 1997
14) Nieves Bombay	Inacao, Antipolo, Rizal	Florante E. Estrada SS#03-430507-1	February 27, 2006
15) Lourdes N. Fomentera	Malina Pang, Davao City	Santos Fomentera SS#09-027221-1	June 10, 2006
16) Imelda Gabor	Unknown	Maribel Gabor SS#33-1151464-8	September 17, 2006
17) Willy Laureaga Zulvelita Plodo	Unknown	Camilo R. Lauriga SS#03-2079968-0	September 27, 2006
18) Jasmine Macadato	016 B. Kasoy St., Commonwealth, QC	Magalona Macadato SS#33-6217298-7	September 15, 2006
19) Victoria A. Madalodog	P4 Buklad, Asuncion, Davao del Norte	Fernando M. Madalodog SS#09-2402280-5	May 29, 2006
20) Dominador Miguel Jose Miguel	231 Aguado St., San Miguel, Manila	Eligio L. Miguel SS#03-1436450-0	March 3, 2005
21) Generosa Parante	Unknown	Benjamin D. Momongan SS#03-0207210-5	September 10, 2006
22) Evangelina A. Tariaga Mahaplag, Leyte	Unknown	Felipe J. Navaja SS#33-0679570-2	August 3, 2006
23) Juanita Blaras Hubabil	Pampanga	Millagroso Obahe SS#07-0819070-4	October 26, 1996
24) Anthontette Dela Cruz Palma	Unknown	Rolando Agulla Palma SS#04-1000065-8	September 27, 2006
25) Rosario Penolio	Unknown	Arsenio Penolio SS#03-2486163-7	September 14, 2002
26) Nadie Salting	Kapampangan, Orani, Bataan	Rodolfo Salting SS#02-0109897-6	October 9, 2006
27) Emelita Valiente	Brgy. Uclongan, Escalante City, Negros Occidental	Robinson Sevileno SS#07-0594840-9	July 9, 2006
28) Lucila Perez Tenoso Gumerindo Jr. & Jocelyn Tenoso	Unknown	Gomerclindo L. Tenoso SS#03-2039773-6	March 31, 2006
29) Catherine, Carina, Remundo & Sabino	Unknown	Pio Teslorna SS#06-0805597-8	August 10, 2005
30) Emma Viodor Benjamin	Philips, Bukidnon	Benjamin Viodor SS#08-0743183-0	June 29, 2005

- Nothing follows -

(PDI - Dec. 30, 2006)

SCIENCE/HEALTH

Text us your feedback: inquirer hea name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Cervical cancer vaccine to save patients P500,000

By Tessa R. Salazar

HUMANITY'S AGE-OLD war against cancer recently reached a key milestone as another vaccine was developed to stop another prevalent form of cancer in its tracks. Joining liver cancer vaccine is cervical cancer vaccine. That also means that in 2007, the lives of up to 3,807 Filipino women have been spared from the ravages of cervical cancer.

The Bureau of Food and Drugs gave the go signal for the vaccine on Oct. 30. Commercially branded as Gardasil (containing quadrivalent human papillomavirus), the vaccine's efficacy, however, is limited to boys and girls aged 9 to 26.

Dr. Efren J. Domingo, president of the Society of Gynecologic Oncologists of the Philippines Inc., said another type of Gardasil for 26- to 44-year-old women is already in Phase 3 study and he expects a BFAD approval of the MSD (Merck, Sharp and Dohme) product in 2008 or 2009.

Gardasil is the first and only BFAD-approved HPV vaccine in the Philippines and in other 43 countries to date. The other candidate cervical cancer vaccine is Cervarix (Bivalent HPV vaccine).

The vaccine is expected to prevent 70 percent of cervical cancers caused by the HPV virus subtypes 16 and 18. It is expected to prevent 90 percent of anogenital warts in men and women caused by HPV subtypes 6 and 11. It is also expected to prevent 70 percent of the cancers in the vulva, vagina and anogenital areas of women. It would also prevent men from transmitting the virus to women.

Price obstacles

Get ready for the downside, though. The estimated cost of the vaccine is P15,000 and P21,000. Domingo admitted that the price range would, indeed, be prohibitive for the middle-income group.

He said, however, that comparing this to the total cost of cervical

cancer treatment in hospitals would be worth the expense. He added that the hospital treatment of cervical cancer could reach as much as P500,000 per patient.

According to Domingo, a complete vaccination requires three shots of Gardasil on month zero, month two and month six.

He explained that each injection of 0.5 ml is prefilled, and is given in the deltoid or buttocks. Each ampule costs between P5,100 and P7,000, depending on the doctor administering the shots.

Domingo added that this would be cheaper compared to the same shots administered in the United States, where a doctor could charge \$160 per shot.

Who qualifies?

Domingo, who is also a professor of the UP College of Medicine, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, said any healthy 9- to 26-year-old boy or girl is qualified to have a vaccine.

Any woman who is pregnant

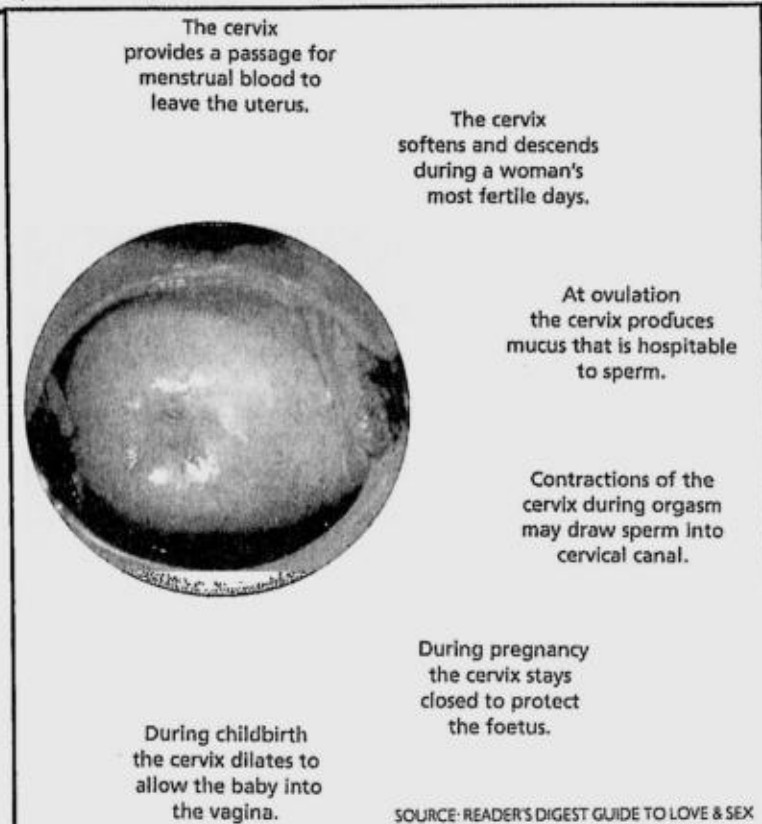
and any person infected with HIV-AIDS or any serious immunocompromised illnesses are not allowed to be vaccinated with Gardasil. The vaccination may be postponed to the time after birth or after recovery from a major illness.

Patients should also consult their obstetrician-gynecologist or pediatrician before undergoing vaccination and learn about the vaccine.

When asked if Gardasil would be a one-time vaccination guaranteeing a lifetime of immunity, Domingo stressed that at the moment the need for a booster dose has not been determined since this was a new treatment.

"Initial patients who received this vaccine under MSD's research were followed up for five years, and the geometric mean titers of neutralizing antibodies were found to have remained very high," Domingo said.

"The knowledge about the need for a booster (dose) will be known in due time after the patients, called 'sentinel cohorts'



housed in the Nordic Registry in Norway, would have matured in their monitoring.

This information is three years ahead of any other patient in the world who has received Gardasil, and so, the medical community and the patients will be notified three years ahead in case a booster is necessary."

Ian Frazer from Australia discovered the HPV-VLP vaccine

against oncogenic subtypes 16 and 18 and non-oncogenic subtypes 6 and 11. His works in the 1990s together with Dr. Zhou from China have been regarded as pioneering.

Each year, cervical cancer kills around 300,000 women around the world, while nearly 500,000 new cases are diagnosed. More than 80 percent of these cases occur in developing countries



To the good times ahead

LAST WEEK'S COLUMN INTRODUCED A study by psychologists from the University of California at Los Angeles about the effect of positive feedback on those in a relationship. To be precise, Shelly Gable and her colleagues hypothesized that relationships lasted longer when both parties involved felt that their significant others responded positively to their own personal triumphs.

Gable et al. noted that when people are happy or excited about something, their partners naturally share their joy. This, at least, was assumed. And yet the researchers found this wasn't always the case when they reviewed their data from the study outlined in the previous column.

The researchers asked couples to take turns sharing positive and negative events they'd experienced. Gable et al. then discarded the data collected from the negative events related since their hypothesis focused on how the positive events were received when shared. This made it a bit difficult to prove their first hypothesis that when the one member of each couple related a story for the study, the significant other would react according to the positive or negative content of the story. If the story had been considered negative by the narrator, the data were not reviewed.

Based on gender

With regard to the second hypothesis—that the perceived response of participant's partner to the story shared helped predict the relationship's long-term prospects—Gable et al. found that the results differed based on gender.

When men shared a positive event, they felt that they received equally positive feedback from their partners so long as it was what the researchers termed "active and constructive" as opposed to neutral or negative. When the women shared a positive event however, they categorized their partners' responses based on how personally important they felt the event was. For example, if the woman had been given a long-awaited promotion, she expected her partner to be extremely enthusiastic and animated. If the response was less "active-constructive" than they'd expected, the women felt that their partners had low responsiveness. If the woman had related a positive event that she'd personally rated less significant, such as

DISCOVER



Massie Santos Ballon

receiving a compliment from a friend, she expected a positive but more muted response.

In short, as Gable et al. wrote, men expect their partners to respond actively and constructively regardless of event importance, but women only expect [this] when they themselves view the event as important."

Lower scores given

The researchers found that 4 of the nearly 80 couples who took part in the study had broken up by the time they sent out follow-up questionnaires. Upon reviewing the data collected on these 4 couples, they found that these participants had given lower scores to their partners' responsiveness to the positive events shared than the other participants had. These data and the conclusion reached by Gable et al. shouldn't be considered final, however. In fact, the study itself shouldn't be considered definitive, and the researchers themselves argue against that notion.

For example, the study's results might have been affected if the participants hadn't only been dating but had also included married couples since the interactions might be different. It is likely that the choice of participants was skewed by the researchers' affiliations with a dating service; this may change however as it appears the dating service itself is now trying to cater to married couples by acting as a relationship counselor service as well.

As the new year approaches, though, the results do suggest a resolution to be made and kept: when good news is shared, it's only fair to respond as enthusiastically to the excitement and the joy conveyed. To express anything less would suggest a lack of interest, which can only hurt the person sharing the news. Regardless of the type of relationship involved, it never hurts to share the joy.

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

Bites that kill

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua



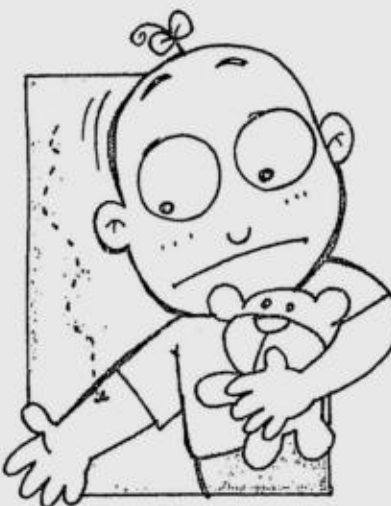
and joint pains. Dengue comes from the phrase *ki deng* pepo, which means cramping seizure caused by evil spirit. The term was an attempt to describe victims of the then still unknown disease during outbreaks in Swahili, East Africa, and in the Caribbean in 1880s. DHF epidemics were first experienced in Southeast Asia in the 1950s. By 1975, DHF had become a primary cause of death among children in the region.

Dengue fever or its potentially fatal form, dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF), affects tropical and subtropical regions where warm temperature and high relative humidity favor the breeding and proliferation of *Aedes aegypti* (tiger) mosquitoes. These mosquitoes are small and dark, with white bands around their body.

To make matters worse, DHF is caused by four different but related serologically related viruses. It is transmitted by day-biting female mosquitoes that have bitten infected persons. These persons may or may not show any sign of illness but are unknowingly ready sources of infection.

Deadly transmission

The mosquitoes breed in water.



Deciphering the deadly virus

Dengue is not new. Benjamin Rush coined the term "breakbone fever" during its first reported case in 1789 due to the victims' torturous muscle

holding containers such as unused or junk tires, drums, jars, bottles, tree holes, roof gutter and flower vases. Unclean urban areas are generally the favorite habitat of these virus carriers, although they can also be found in wealthy residential districts, schools and other public places.

Moreover, crowding contributes to transmission since mosquitoes prefer to stay in domestic and commercial habitats. The mosquito usually survives up to 10 days, but with favorable conditions, it can stay alive for up to three weeks, spreading its deadly disease.

What to do

Once the virus enters the body, the body tries to stop the bleeding, hence the depletion of blood platelets is one of the clearest manifestations of DHF. The victim suffers from a sudden high fever, with severe headache, joint and muscle pains, and rashes (or red spots) lasting for some days. There is no treatment, but care can be given to alleviate symptoms. Oral rehydration (or through the vein) is required. Paracetamol can be given to reduce fever, but not aspirin or acetaminophen, since these can increase risk of bleeding.

Sadly, agencies react only when DHF cases reach alarming numbers. Many seek financial assistance from the National Dengue Control Program, but control measures are irregular, such as preventive fogging. Public health experts believe that success of the dengue control program depends on a holistic strategy.

In the Philippines, we have laws to safeguard health, such as the Code on Sanitation (1975), the Local Government Code (1993), the Clean Air Act (1999), the Ecological Solid Waste Management (2000) and the Clean Water Act (2004). There are also administrative orders regarding dengue control activities and memoranda of agreement with various national agencies regarding the prevention and control of dengue outbreaks. But the real challenge for all of us is implementation.

Queena N. Lee-Chua is professor of mathematics and psychology at Ateneo de Manila University. Contact her at blessbook@yahoo.com.

Never too late the Hero

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

TODAY, DEC. 30, AS WE CELEBRATE Rizal Day, another type of Heroism will hopefully improve the future of the healthcare system in the Philippines. The President is expected to sign today an executive order which is expected to improve attitudes, orientation and allocation of resources regarding healthcare delivery in our country. This latest EO is called Hero (Health Education Reform Order).

The primary goal of the proposed EO is to improve the healthcare and education system of the Filipino people through the broad partnership of government, legislators, educators, physicians, the business sector and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). This broad coalition will hopefully muster greater support for programs that would target the pre-

vention of the leading causes of sickness and deaths in the country. The ultimate goal is to create a healthier Filipino.

The EO also aims to create and build a culture of commitment, involving not only healthcare professionals but others as well to help heal the various "ills" and tribulations of the nation. With a deep sense of commitment, the "haves" would hopefully share their blessings with the "have-nots" by way of social responsibility programs, specifically in the areas of health and education.

Health plan proponent

The proponent of this nationalistic health plan is the Philippine College of Physicians (PCP) through its communications committee headed by Dr. Tony Lea-

chon. The PCP is the national organization of all internist-specialists in the country and consists of more than 6,000 members many of whom run the country's top hospitals and medical institutions.

MEDICAL FILES

The current president is Dr. Rene Juaneza, a pulmonary specialist based in Iloilo City. The plan was highly recommended and endorsed by the Senate, Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education. Sen. Jun Magsaysay is one of the staunch supporters of the plan.

The PCP believes that there is a link between deterioration in healthcare condition and quality of education. Therefore, by improving the quality of education, healthcare condition should gradually improve with time. "Preven-

tive education and inculcation of values can make wonders for our nation's health and healthcare system in the long term," Drs. Juaneza and Leachon explain.

Treasuring one's health

This makes some sense since education on the preventive aspects of the common causes of illness and death can foster a strong sense of treasuring one's health, and never allowing it to be compromised by a lifestyle characterized by smoking, drinking, overeating and other forms of indulgence. One's health is also frequently put in jeopardy in one's pursuit of material wealth when one starts to work.

The Hero will mandate the DepEd, Department of Science and Technology, CHED and other educators to incorporate relevant

health education updates which will emphasize the prevention of leading causes of illness and death such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), diabetes and other communicable diseases in the school curriculum of primary, secondary, college and postgraduate levels.

It proposes also to include relevant topics like moral values, integrity, patriotism, leadership, communication skills, code of ethics and passion for excellence. The emphasis on morals and values aims to create and build a new culture of commitment which will help uplift our economy and enhance the image of Filipinos here and abroad.

Plan of action

The plan of action is to identify, harmonize and consolidate all advocacy and public health cam-

paign programs in cooperation with the government and the different subspecialty societies of the PCP and other medical organizations affiliated with the Philippine Medical Association (PMA), that would address the top 10 leading causes of morbidity and mortality, currently afflicting the country.

A big challenge for this proposal to be effectively executed is to influence the government and its legislators to increase the budget allocation for health and bring it, maybe not at par, but at least a little closer to what the World Health Organization recommends. At present, our health allocation is not even a third of the WHO recommendation.

We wish this Hero had come earlier, but for a cause like a nation's health, it's never too late the hero.

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang



PROPERTY

Helping cut the backlog a few houses at a time

By Charles E. Buban

SWEDEN-BASED FIRM Atlas Copco is not only known for manufacturing compressors, construction and mining tools and equipment, power tools and assembly systems. It recently embarked on home building, albeit, sponsoring several housing units under the Habitat for Humanity movement.

"Providing decent housing to people who are unable to afford their own home should always be on the top list of any company's corporate responsibility program. The Habitat for Humanity gave us the opportunity to share," said Atlas Copco (Philippines) Inc. GM Jonnie Regis.

He said housing is a constant challenge as the Philippines is home to almost 90 million people.

With the population growing at an annual rate of 2.32 percent, data from the National Statistical Coordination Board revealed that the country would need

3.75 million units by 2010 (and yet, the country now has a housing backlog of almost a million).

Encourage private sector

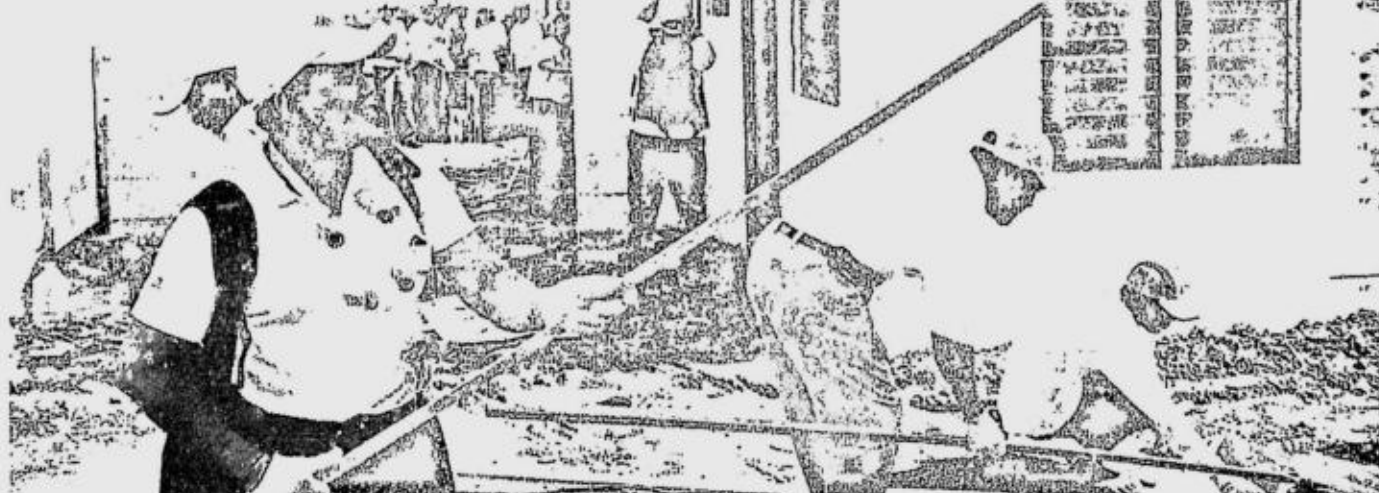
With this scenario, the government is currently working on how to provide more shelter assistance and pursue strategies to encourage more private sector participation in housing production.

"This is where we come in and with organizations like Habitat for Humanity, there exists a proper channel where our contributions are reaching those who need it," Regis said.

The Habitat for Humanity movement was founded in 1976 in the United States. The program, which was developed from the concept of "partnership housing," helps bring those indigent families side by side with volunteers from the donor individual or company to build simple, decent houses.

Mudslide victims

In this case, Atlas Copco has chosen to support the Habitat for Humanity in Barangay Guinsaugon, St. Bernard, Southern Leyte where the beneficiary



ATLAS Copco (Philippines) Inc. GM Regis (left with paint roller) leads the painting of the donated houses.

families are victims of the recent mudslide.

The company collaborated with the Semi-conductors and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Inc. and contributed three housing units.

Regis said the Atlas Copco Employees Club (Acec) voluntarily donated the fund, which was supposedly the group's budget for the summer outing.

"Their sacrifice is well worth it considering they would be helping families satisfy a very basic need," explained Regis.

Supported GK

This is not the first time the company has supported a housing project as Atlas Copco also built two housing units for a Gawad Kalinga project in Davao City that helped several relocated families living in the riverbanks last September.

Regis informed that the company's house building projects are just part of its future plans of helping the community where they are getting business.

"Atlas Copco is also looking at adapt-

ing a school or another community in the future," he said.

Habitat for Humanity now spans over 100 countries and is responsible for placing over 200,000 families into new homes around the world while the Gawad Kalinga is a movement that envisions building 700,000 homes in 7,000 communities in seven years through its GK777 campaign. The campaign was formally launched on Oct. 4, 2003 and looks forward to deliver its promise by Oct. 4, 2010.

Building lifestyle communities

IN THE OLD DAYS, PEOPLE LIVING IN A barangay met and socialized at the corner barbershop or *sari-sari* (variety) store. For big events like fiestas or Lenten or Christmas celebrations, people congregated at the church plaza or blocked off their main street to party. Even today, this custom holds true in the small provincial towns and barrios. When the practice is retained in an urban center, it is considered quaint and charming.

More recently, in many areas, barangay halls or covered courts have been the site of gatherings for basketball league games, community singing or beauty competitions, local political rallies and other such activities. Today, even in the smaller subdivisions, one of the basic amenities and initial come-ons is the village clubhouse, no matter how bare or gaudy it may be. It seems that people just need a place to relax away but near enough

from home, a place to pass the time with co-residents, a place to celebrate as a community.

Apparently, the more relaxed residents feel about the communal area (enough for them to be able to be in their most casual clothes and slippers), the more involved neighbors are in community life. People must experience some degree of being close to home, yet able to interact with neighbors, but with the assurance that they can still go back to their privacy whenever they want it. A community venue answers this natural requisite and developers have not been slow in responding to this palpable need.

Community gathering sites

Through the years, community gathering sites

LIVING ARCHITECTURE



Marcos de Guzman Jr.

have been improved and reengineered, designed and renovated to suit the residents' taste and inclination. Subdivision development has reached new heights in the last few years compared to the epitome of subdivision style of the '80s. Back then, living in style meant residences in the posh villages of Greenhills, Valle Verde, or Dasmarinas, with a nearby sports club to fill one's days. Nowadays, aside from the minimum requirements imposed by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB) regarding open spaces, developers are going the extra mile in offering increasingly attractive features.

For instance, at the Ayala Westgrove Heights in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, several relaxation and social centers are being built in different areas of one development. These include the main clubhouse and swimming pool, a kids' activity center called Kidsgrove with a kid-friendly pool, a sports center with several tennis and badminton courts, and other social function clubs located in various sites throughout the subdivision. Residents do not have to cram into only one space during their leisure time. They have a choice of several very accessible locations, depending on their preference at the moment. These structures, though differing in purpose, are similar in style and finishes to uphold a sense of identity for the whole development.

Better and better options

In the coming years, we can only expect more real estate developers to offer better and better options for subdivision living. Common

spaces, such as parks, chapels and clubs, will have to be more suited to the homeowners' wants and needs. In communities farther from city hubs, commercial areas could be provided to ease residents' travel time.

In subdivisions targeted for young families, nursery and elementary schools must be planned. In older communities, specialist clinics could be ideal. But in every development, planners must consider not just the individual family that moves in, but also the community of families that will arise. If the vision is toward a warm and friendly community, there must be infrastructure to support this. Families cannot just get to know each other in the streets; the environment must encourage the camaraderie. There ought to be places to connect with neighbors, pleasant, inviting settings where social bridges can be built, collective walls torn down. Then, friendships begin and community prospers.



THE FIRST phase of the Ayala Westgrove Heights Sports Center.

The best studio unit at Manhattan Garden City

WHEN YOU'RE SINGLE AND SUCCESSFUL, you'd want a home that puts you at the center of it all. A short ride takes you to the metro's business districts for your appointments. An elevator ride away and you're ready for a memorable night with your friends at the country's first lifestyle and leisure center. To cap it all off, you proudly show them your new home, undoubtedly the best studio unit in the whole metro because of its very functional layout.

Make this scenario your very own, once you get a studio unit at Manhattan Garden City. The hip studio model unit's



THE MANHATTAN Garden City studio unit with balcony offers the best studio layout in the whole metro.



THE MODERN tropical theme makes it highly appealing to yuppies and starting families.

Modern Tropical motif has earned raves and "wows" from many investors. Its horizontal layout means that spaces are perfectly segregated and with door panels, you can even turn it into a compact one-bedroom unit.

Tropical theme

Upon entering, the tropical theme will make you feel relaxed. Stools made of woven native material and a dividing door made of bamboo are the highlights of the living room, bringing back good old memories of your last beach resort trip. Neutral colors and dark reds propose a healthy interplay, making the

room lively in character.

The bedroom is also a resort haven, as dark wood, red, gold and beige combine to bring about a feeling of Shangri-La. This is the perfect spot to relax, with a plasma TV for supreme entertainment and a desk for writing items in your journals. Just outside your bedroom, a spacious balcony hosts a meditation garden cum fountain and a sun lounger, perfect for some yoga or morning exercise. It's also good for entertaining your friends late into the night.

Strategic location

Every day, an adventure awaits you

at Manhattan Garden City. It is strategically located within the Araneta Center, and it is the first and only transit-oriented development that boasts of direct access to both the LRT2 and MRT3. Thus, you'll always be on time for your important business meetings in Ortigas and Makati. Definitely, it's the only project that makes it extremely convenient to travel in and around the metro.

At night, the biggest entertainment area in the whole of Metro Manila awaits you when you go home. Since Manhattan Garden City is strategically located within Araneta Center, you are at the center of all the activities. Watch concerts and basketball games at the Araneta Coliseum, do some shopping at the stylish Gateway Mall, or go to the supermarket to prepare for a get-together.

Newest offering

Is there anything else that will make the best studio unit even better? Yes! With Homelite, the newest offering from leading developer Megaworld Corp. and Security Bank, you can own a studio unit at Manhattan Garden City for as low as P10,847 per month. Definitely, it's the best real estate deal you can ever get these days!

It's best that you check the metro's best studio unit now. So, visit the Manhattan Garden City showroom at the third level of Gateway Mall. Or call 810-3333 or email inquire@themanhattan-gardencity.com immediately for a viewing appointment.

Aqua Guard®
Elastomeric Waterproofing Paint



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BUSINESS



STREET vendor Danny Miso hawks pillows for P75 a piece. Miso walks some 25 kilometers a day, working 12 hours a day to make some P400 to P500. The economy has shown some positive growth this year, with GDP rising by 5.5 percent in the second quarter. AFP

S&P says debt ratios key to credit-rating upgrade

Notes positive developments in RP economy

A STRING OF POSITIVE economic figures from the Philippines bodes well for its sovereign rating, but any upgrade will require a consistent performance and an improvement in key debt ratios, Standard & Poor's said yesterday.

S&P rates Philippine sovereigns at BB-minus with a stable outlook, which is below investment grade. S&P will review the rating in the first quarter of 2007.

Many analysts have said positive economic data from the Philippines this year—including controlling the budget deficit, increased government revenues, sharply higher remittances from overseas and a strong peso currency—augur well for a ratings upgrade.

On Thursday, the Bangko Sen-

tral ng Pilipinas announced it was paying the last of its obligations to the International Monetary Fund ahead of schedule, thereby ending four and a half decades of drawing on IMF resources.

"As far as the prepayment of the IMF debt is concerned, I think that in itself won't have much of an impact on the ratings because that is a drop in the ocean compared to the \$35 billion of outstanding external public debt," S&P credit analyst Agost Benard said in a telephone interview.

But he added: "It conveys the country's external finances are on the right track and there is a diminishing dependence on external funds. And this is just the latest in a string of positive develop-

ments which we have seen throughout this year."

But a ratings upgrade will have to be preceded by a change in the outlook to positive from stable, Benard said. And there were other factors to be considered.

"The big question with respect to all these positive developments is to what extent are they one off and to what extent do they signal a permanently improved environment—both a political and a policy environment," he said.

Also, the Philippines' debt ratios are quite poor—its foreign debt-to-GDP ratio fell at the end of the third quarter, but was still high at 48.6 percent.

Debt servicing was at 11.4 percent of total exports of goods and services in the first nine months

of the year.

"When you look at those figures, debt to GDP, general government interest to revenues, debt to revenues, the Philippines is still an outlier in the BB-minus rating category," Benard said.

"Those ratios are still a lot worse than the median for similarly rated countries."

And while government revenues have risen, much of the increase resulted from a new expanded value-added tax, which was raised to 12 percent from 10 percent in February.

From next February, the annual comparison won't benefit from the increase in the rate.

Despite the caution, financial markets have marked the improvement in the Philippines' economic performance. Reuters

BIR extends program for delinquent taxpayers to Jan. 31

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue has further extended its Abatement Program for tax delinquents to Jan. 31 next year, saying there was still a significant number of taxpayers who wanted to apply but could not meet the earlier deadlines.

The original deadline for the Abatement Program was Oct. 31,

but was extended to Dec. 22 to accommodate more applicants. The BIR said another extension was needed to grant several requests for an extension.

The Abatement Program, under Revenue Regulation No. 15-2006, is the BIR's compromise offer for delinquent taxpayers and one of the measures intended to help cover its tax-collection shortfall.

Under the program, the BIR

may drop pending civil cases against tax delinquents and waive all penalties if they would volunteer to pay the principal amount of their tax obligation.

However, those whose cases are criminal in nature, those that are pending before the Presidential Commission on Good Government, and those filed under the Run After Tax Evaders Program are not eligible to apply for

the Abatement Program.

The Abatement Program was expected to have somehow helped the BIR arrest its tax collection shortfall so far seen as of November. The Department of Finance, head agency of the BIR, however, said that actual amount of additional taxes collected under the Abatement program has yet to be finalized.

In January to November, the

BIR collected P594.1 billion, falling short of the target for the 11-month period by about P27 billion. For the whole of 2006, the BIR is expected to likewise fall short of the official tax collection target of P675.4 billion.

The BIR has contested the P675.4-billion target and insisted that its fair target should be P601.4 billion.

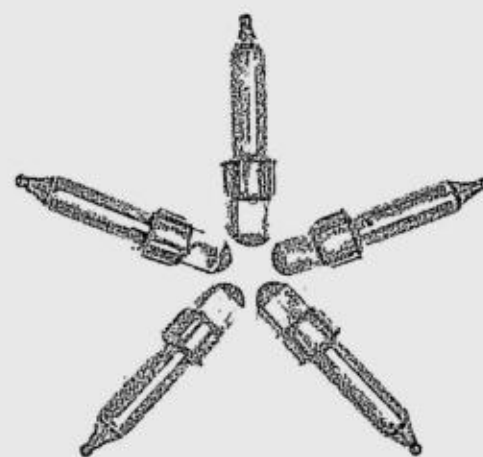
Internal Revenue Commission-

er Jose Mario Buñag said its target should be reduced by taking away expected tax collection from the issuance of government securities, given the move of the national government to trim down the volume of treasury bills and bonds it issued.

Buñag said the BIR should not be held accountable for shortfalls in the collection of taxes that it has no control over.

Guiding light.

This Christmas season, despite the many lights around us, may we always look to that light that leads us home.



Maliwanag ang Pasko.



may liwanag ang buhay

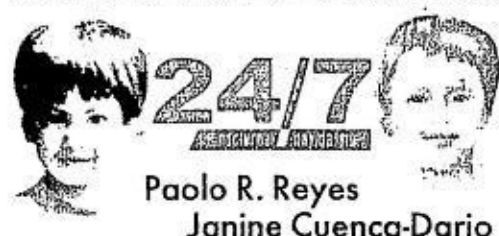
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Editor Pam Pastor
Creative Director Tim Yan

Our annual list
of **Super's 27**
peeps to watch out
for in **2007** page D1

**Pepe Diokno does
the Metro Manila
filmfest marathon**



Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dario

Firework Wizards

JUST WHEN WE THOUGHT the gung-ho spirit of the Asian Games was going to dwindle out before the holidays, we discovered yet another reason to cheer on the Filipino ... uh ... pyrotechnician.

From Jan. 5 to 13, the country once again plays host to the 2nd World Pyro Olympics. Witness firework wizards from 10 participating countries—Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, Germany, Philippines, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom and the USA—slug it out in a bedazzling 6-day championship.

In between the pyro displays, a talented pool of Pinoy musicians, acrobats, clowns, fire-breathers and more are set to rock the night for the spectators.

All the action takes place at The Esplanade, which is directly behind SM Mall of Asia. Tickets are priced at P100, P500, and P1,250, and are available at all RCBC and RCBC Savings branches. Visit www.WorldPyroOlympics.com or call 817-3073 to 75.

Other Super! 24/7 events:

Dec. 30, Saturday

Lounge-O-Rama w/ Soundsgood DJs at Embassy Cuisine; House Nation at Capone's; Rouge: Lounge in Color at M Café; DJs Jon Herrera & Tolo Bote at Temple; Sleepless w/ DJ Martin Pulgar at Embassy Club; Wham Bam w/ DJ Bam at Government; DJs Scratchmark & Jenna at Prince of Jaipur

Dec. 31, Sunday

Countdown to 2007 at the Embassy Super Club; New Year Party at Saguijo

Jan. 1, Monday

Happy Mondays! w/ Borgy Manotoc at Embassy Cuisine; I Don't Like Mondays! w/ DJ RO at Gwellos Makati; Chemical Underground w/ Kishore at Absinth; Acoustic Nights at Azzurro Linden Suites; Follies de Mwah at Club Mwah; Cartoonival at Araneta Coliseum

Jan. 2, Tuesday

Cuisine Royale w/ DJ Manolet Dario at Embassy Cuisine; Sparkle w/ DJs Erwin Edralin & Patch at Absinth; Eileen Sison & the Guarana band at Café Havana Greenbelt; Piano Nights at Azzurro Linden Suites

Jan. 3, Wednesday

DJs Mars Miranda & Johnnyverse at Embassy Club; Hustle & Flow at Temple; Wine Buffet at Mezze; Stereo Therapy at Embassy VIP Room; Willy Wanka's Music Factory at Gwellos Makati

Jan. 4, Thursday

DJ Boyet Almazan at Fiamma; Fluxxe: Whatever Thursdays at Absinth; SPIT at Mag:net Café; Thirsty Thirst-days at Bed

Jan. 5, Friday

Flammable Fridays w/ DJ Mau Torres at Mezze; DJ Owens Sun at Embassy Club; Soul Shine w/ DJ Marie Garcia at Embassy Cuisine; Jive w/ DJs Darrel & McDash at Temple; DJs Scratchmark & Jenna at Prince of Jaipur.

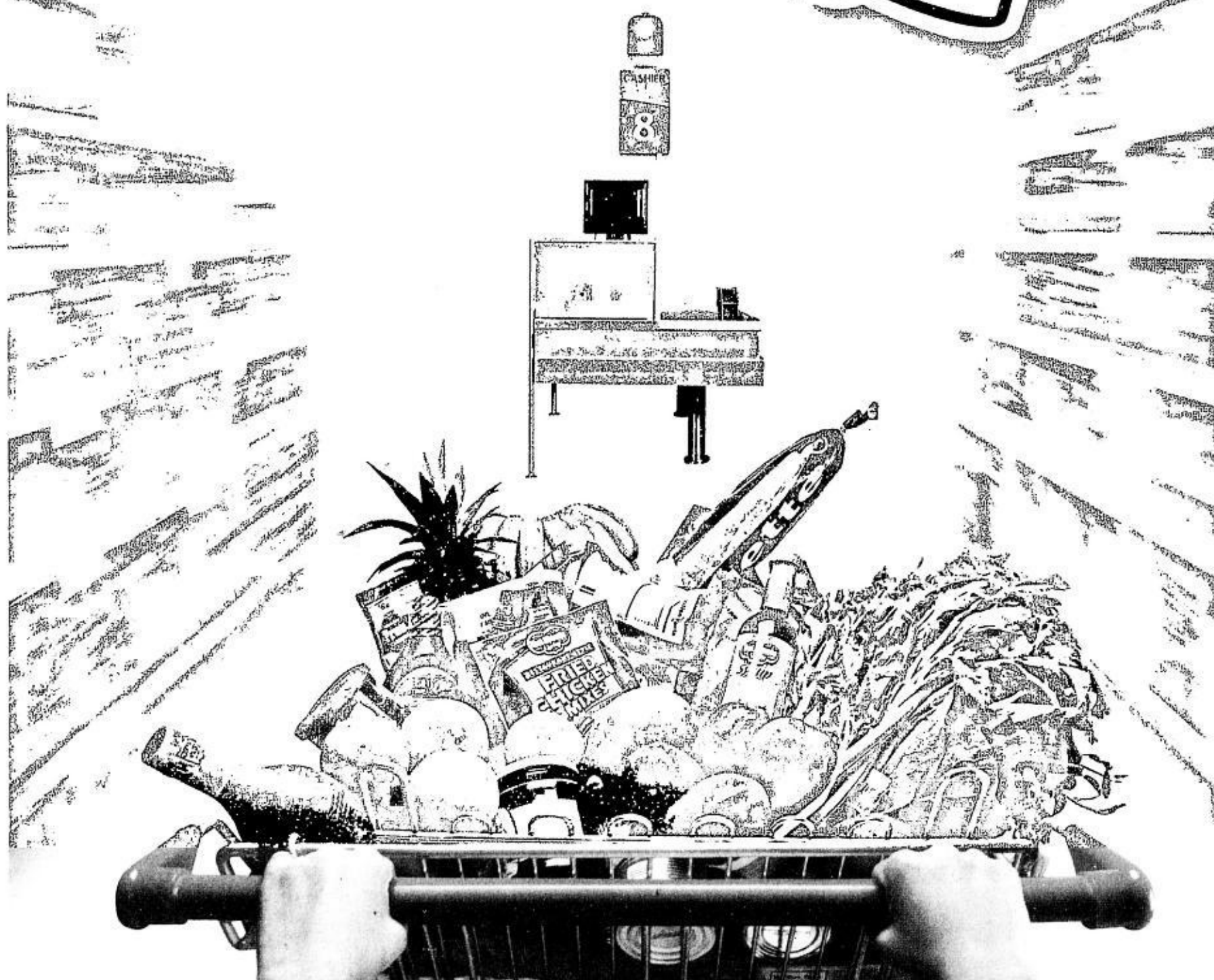
Schedules may change without prior notice. For more info, text 24/7 GIGS to 2851 (Globe) and 2951 (Smart). Log on to mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 Nocturnal Navigator at bars and restos around the city. Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events@mag24-7.com & mag24_7@yahoo.com.



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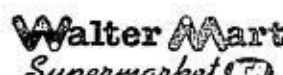


Promo Period: December 15, 2006 to January 31, 2007



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Pavilion shopper's frenzy at the Manila Pavilion Hotel

SHOPPING CENTERS ARE CRAMMED WITH frantic Yuletide shoppers. But why get lost in the search for that perfect present, when you can purchase them through the Pavilion Shopper's Frenzy.

From a smorgasbord of seasonal offerings under Pastry Delights, Mrs. Santa's Sweet Surprises, Take Home Tinsel Treats, Christmas Hampers to hotel memberships, gift certificates, parties and dinner reservations under Posh Presents. It's all here! A comprehensive order form has been provided for easy order placing. Simply fill-out the form, detach, fax, wait for the confirmation and voila, your orders can be claimed at your desired pick-up date and time. Now isn't that a piece of cake?

Orders are accepted until Jan. 6, 2007. But

if you place your orders before Nov. 15, 2006, you'd get to enjoy 20 percent discount for every purchase of our Christmas Hampers. And as a special seasonal treat, we are giving away 1 gift certificate and/or ticket for every 10 purchases of Seasons Gift Certificate and 2007 Blast Off!!! New Year's Countdown Party ticket.

Gifts you would want to give and gifts that you would want to receive are available at this ultimate fold-out gift guide. With the Pavilion Shopper's Frenzy, there's no such thing as a



holiday rush!
For inquiries or reservations, please call Manila Pavilion Hotel at 526-1212 extension 2408.

The perfect gift that needs no wrapping

MADE YOUR LIST, CHECKED IT TWICE but still unsure of what to give your friends and family? Teriyaki

Boy comes to the rescue with Banquet Boxes guaranteed to make gift-giving and hosting parties simple, elegant and enjoyable.

You can choose from four varieties sure to delight the people on your holiday list: Teriyaki Boy's Tempura Party Mix, The Mixed Sushi package, the All-California Maki box, and the Sashimi Mix. All come packed in tasteful rectangular boxes with clear plastics lid showing Teriyaki Boy's yummy treats inside. That way, you won't have to spend more time and money on gift wrapping.

In addition, Teriyaki Boy's Banquet Boxes come in small and large packages to suit your



budget, your recipient or the type of party it's for. The Tempura Party Mix is good to go for P810, or P1,090 for a family party. The

Mixed Sushi package is available for P840 or P1,175 for a large Banquet Box. The all-time favorite, the All-California Maki, comes in boxes priced at P970 and P1,280. And Teriyaki Boy's Sashimi Mix offers oodles of goodness for P1,110, or P1,450 for a party pack.

New Teriyaki Boy branches are located at Robinsons Galleria (Tel. No. 632-9126), Greenbelt 1 (Tel. No. 815-1495), One Destination Tagaytay (Tel. No. 046-413-4459), and SM The Block (Tel. No. 442-0161) so contact or drop by any conveniently-located Teriyaki Boy Restaurant to pick up your Banquet Boxes.

Pinoys Greenwich Pizza 2007 Taste Drive Event

PROUD OF ITS LATEST PIZZA LINE, Greenwich recently held the Greenwich Pizza 2007 Taste Drive, an exclusive sampling activity for celebrities and friends from the media held at the SM Mall of Asia.

Hosted by TV personality Juddha Paolo, the highly-successful affair was graced by radio's funny tandem Chico and Delamar, TV personality Niña Dolino. Other friends from ABS-CBN, GMA 7, Studio 23, Solar Entertainment, ETC, RPN 9, Jam 88.3, NU Rock, Mellow Touch and a lot more experienced the thrill of Greenwich Pizza 2007 as guests swore by the deliciousness of Greenwich pizzas and have discovered the many

scrumptious treats that Greenwich is so known for.

One of the highlights of the event was the texting game, wherein three lucky guests got to take home Greenwich gift certificates.

A day after the media launch, the Taste Drive Event then culminated in over 200 Greenwich stores nationwide, which was deluged by throngs of pizza lovers. Various Greenwich branches nationwide were visited by consumers to sample the wide variety of delectable Greenwich pizza 2007, which enjoy a huge following among consumers owing to their exceptional taste.

During the highly-successful sampling activity, customers were seen relishing bite after bite of delicious Greenwich pizza, as Greenwich generously provided free samples of scrumptious pizza, much to the delight of everyone.

The activity was truly fun - and filling - for pizza lovers who came from every corner of the Philippines, as they all enjoyed the great-tasting goodness and deliciousness of Greenwich pizzas.

Enjoy your favorite yummy Greenwich pizza by visiting your nearest Greenwich outlet or dial 819-4000 and Greenwich's Siguradong On Time delivery service will make sure that your orders are delivered fresh and on the dot. Provincial residents on the other hand, simply have to dial the Greenwich delivery hotline in their respective area.



CELEBRATE NEW YEAR AT DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO

DINE WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS AT DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO AS you welcome the Year of the Fire Pig this 2007. Partake on Thien Duong's New Year's Eve and New Year's Day menu specials consisting of appetizer, salad, soup, main course, and dessert, prepared by Chef Nguyen. To celebrate the New Year, Benjarong's Thai Chef Tun prepared a special set menu on December 31, 2006 and January 01, 2007 which consist of an appetizer, salad, soup, three main course dishes and dessert. This is the perfect meal to start the New Year right. Savor the special Yuletide dinner buffet offered at The Café on December 31,

2006 and January 01, 2007 for only PhP1,050.00++ per person. Guests will be provided with a complimentary glass of sparkling wine as part of the dinner buffet. Come party on December 31, at the hotel's Grand Ballroom with the New Minstrels Band. Dance and groove to the music of the 80's and 90's with the band's repertoire that made the legendary musical group - "The Best Show Band in Asia." Ticket price is PhP1,750.00 net with buffet dinner, one round of iced tea or soda and party favors. Dinner is at 7:30 p.m. while the show starts at 9:30 p.m. For more information, call 867-3333

People, Events & Products

One delightful loaf from Gardenia

IN THIS WORLD WHERE NEARLY EVERYONE IS BECOMING HEALTH-CONSCIOUS, there's a need to find the right food that will give all the nutritional benefits needed to keep us up all day and protect us from deadly diseases. Oats are generally considered healthy, or health food, being touted commercially as nutritious. It could be observed that a lot of food items these days use oats as ingredients such as biscuits and chocolates. This is primarily due to the fact that it can provide almost all of the nutrients and minerals the body needs to help prevent diseases and to keep us going as stated by the Home-Grown Cereals Authority. As Gardenia understands everyone's need for healthy and delightful food, it has developed a mouth-watering loaf that will make you enjoy both good taste and nutrition by combining these two magnificent ingredients. The Gardenia Honey Oat Loaf is made with the goodness of quaker oats and natural honey. Enjoy the scrumptious Gardenia Honey Oat Loaf - for a healthy heart, healthy body, and healthy life.



Yuletide gifts, Acer style

IN A QUANDARY ON WHAT DELIGHTFUL gifts to give this Yuletide season for your loved ones? Check out Acer products because you'll never go wrong with them. Let's start the rundown on some items in the Acer Yuletide gift list. First up is the Ferrari 1004WTMi notebook PC. A product of the landmark agreement between Acer and Scuderia Ferrari, the company that produced the world's prizewinning and acknowledged race track speed demons, it is, by far, the perfect gift for the season, especially for students or business colleagues. Aside from the fabulous Ferrari, there are also other outstanding notebook computer products from Acer that can be worth giving for Christmas like the Aspire and the TravelMate sub-brands. However, if you think giving away notebook computers during Christmas may be a bit wallet-unfriendly, try Acer's outstanding consumer desktop products like the SA85, E560 and the E560C. But if you are someone who's into giving something more interesting and out-of-the-ordinary, Acer projectors like the XD1150 and X1170D are indeed really innovative Yuletide gift ideas. Try out Acer products as possible gifts for a change, and you'll find out what kind of smile and appreciation you'd get from a loved one because that's what the Holiday Season is all about-bringing good tidings and cheer.





This week's
Super
Selections
lineup is
explosive—
literally

SUPER! SELECTIONS

Fireworks and footwear

By Pam Pastor

DON'T GET US WRONG, we love the giving part, but we're so glad we can put Christmas shopping behind us—at least for another eleven or so months. The mad lines, the crazy traffic, other cash-waving people eager to outshop you—we feel like we've spent a huge chunk of Christmas inside the mall.

This week's Super Selections features things that you can keep for yourself—or, in the case of Enchanted Kingdom's fireworks, enjoy with your family.

But if you decide to use them as late stocking-stuffers, we won't blame you either. Because really, they're good enough to share.

Crocs carnival. Dec. 16 was a memorable day for Crocs Philippines. They opened their first flagship store at Bonifacio High Street, Fort Bonifacio-Taguig with a crazy carnival—face painting, fire show, booth games, clowns, magicians and more. It was also on that day that they launched two new models—Mary Janes and Off-roads. Like all the other Crocs models, they are also made of the ultra-

comfortable material Croslite, which we love.

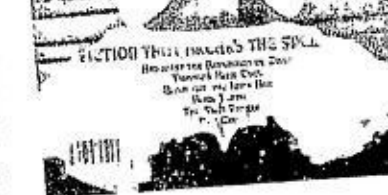
White is the new black. Merrell Performance Footwear is making a strong statement: white is hot, hot, hot. Check out the sporty and lightweight pairs from Merrell's Relay Series.

Enchanted Kingdom in your backyard. Everyone knows that when you go to Enchanted Kingdom, you need to stay for the fireworks. But not everyone knows that you can now bring home the theme park's fireworks. Enchanted Kingdom's

consumer fireworks are also produced by Platinum Fireworks, which is in charge of Enchanted Kingdom's fireworks display. Platinum Fireworks, which is a consistent winner in the park's

annual fireworks competition, promises that the consumer fireworks are safe, user-friendly and have been manufactured according to world-class standards. Enchanted Kingdom Fireworks are available at Enchanted Kingdom in Santa Rosa, Laguna, at their Makati Sales Office at the Ground Floor, The Biltmore Condominium, 102 Aguirre Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City and at Makro Imus. They will also be available in Shopwise outlets soon. For more info, call 867-1006 or 830-21-11 to 16, local 31 and look for Ms Malu Tallud or Ms Anna Lee Lamigo.

Fukubukuro fun. Fukubukuro is a very popular Japanese tradi-



tion. Around the holidays, shops sell fukubukuro—gift bags or packages that contain unknown and varied merchandise that are sold for a large discount. Yes, you don't know exactly what you're buying. Only one thing's for certain—that you are getting a big discount. Because Shu Uemura wants everyone to enjoy this Japanese tradition, they are offering Fukubukuro gifts for a limited time. The gifts are

packed anonymously—and shoppers cannot peek at the contents. Each of the three versions are filled with current star products (cleansing oil, eyelash curler, mascara, limited edition eyeshadow palettes and more) of the brand, worth double the value shoppers will pay for. Visit the Shu Uemura Counters in Rustan's Makati and Rustan's Shangri-La Plaza Mall.

Tell your Story Philippines. If you're a writer, if you love writers, if you love reading, if you enjoy riding words and letting them take you places, this magazine is for you. Visit www.storyphilippines.com.

Calendar for a cause. We love animals, we love PETA and we love PETA's Rescued calendar for 2007. Featuring rescued animals, the calendar's pages will not only help you keep track of important dates, it also reminds you of the importance of taking care of our furry, feathered and fishy friends.

Time for a change. If you feel like you deserve it, strap on a new TechnoMarine watch—choose from their Color Ceramic Collection for women or the rugged Hummer or Abyss 10 900 watch for Men.

Dance dance evolution

IT WAS THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE in dancing artistry and a true test of teen spirit and camaraderie. The finale of the Crissa Teen Synergy Dance Competition '06 Year 3 was an adrenalin-loaded spectacle that left everyone in awe until the very end. The event brought together 11 of the metro's hottest student dance groups under one spotlight.

After two months of eliminations, history repeated itself for Colegio de Santa Rosa Makati, winner of the very first Crissa Teen Synergy Dance Competition in 2004. They were again named as champion of this year's dance contest and they bagged the P200,000 cash prize, a plaque and scholarships grants sponsored by the Asian College of Science and Technology (ACSAT) for all of the group's members.

Dancing to the tune of Madonna's hit Vogue, the group from the International School of Manila also impressed the judges. Their eclectic

rendition of ballet, jazz and tap dance moves earned them the P100,000 cash and a plaque as the event's proud 1st Runner-up.

Last year's grand winner School of Saint Anthony was this year's 2nd runner-up, winning P50,000 cash and a plaque. They also won the Best in Crowd Cheer Award.

The troupe from Colegio de San Lorenzo was awarded with the Most Fashionably Fun Group Award.

There was also a fashion show featuring young models from the competing high schools. Guest band Bamboo fueled the crowd's intensity.

Watch out for a bigger and bolder Crissa Teen Synergy Dance Competition next year.

Crissa fashionably fun clothes are available in all leading department stores and 10 boutiques nationwide including Market! Market!, Robinson's Department Store Galleria and Nueva Ecija Pacific Mall.



No trick, just triple treats

SUN CELLULAR'S SUN TRIPLE Treats wants to shower you and your friends with prizes—gadgets, cash, even your dream car.

You and two of your friends can win the coolest prizes weekly, including Robinson's Gift Certificates, 24/7 Call and Text and

Text Unlimited Loads, iPod Nanos, Philips DVD Players, Canon Powershot Digital Cameras, stylish Sony Ericsson K910i and K990i 3G Cell-phones, Canon Mini DV Camcorders, IBM Thinkcenter PC units, cool Samsung LCD 32" wide screen TVs and 40" television sets with Home Theatre Systems, brand new Mazda 3 1.6 LS sedans and one million pesos each.

To join the promo, register through SMS by texting REG<space>First Name/Last Name/Address and send to

333. Sun will reply with the "group name" which you will send to your barkada and other potential members. To join the second and third barkada member, key in JOIN<space>Group Name/First Name/Last Name/Address and send to 333.

Once registered, your group is automatically included in the raffle promo. By loading up on Sun regular load credits, 24/7 Unlimited Call and Text or Text Unlimited cards, special cards, dealer vouchers, Xpress Load and Docking Station regular and unlimited reloads and IDD call cards, the group gets to earn raffle entries.

Call the Sun Triple Treats Hotline at 395-8333 and 333 toll-free. You may also log on to their website at www.suncellular.com.ph. Promo runs until Jan. 28, 2007.



Kamangha-mangha.



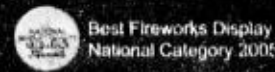
Talagang matutulala ka sa ganda ng Enchanted Kingdom Fireworks! Sa dami ng styles na puwedeng pagpilian. tiyak na sasaya ang kahit anong okasyon – birthday man o fiesta. Guaranteed safe at world-class pa, kaya bumili na ng EK Fireworks and light up your neighborhood!

All Enchanted Kingdom Fireworks are manufactured by Platinum Fireworks under license from Enchanted Kingdom, Inc. and are quality tested for safety. Available at Shopwise Libis, Antipolo, Makati, Alabang and Cubao, Makro Imus and Las Pinas, St. Francis Square, Rustan's Shangri-La Plaza, Enchanted Kingdom Park and Makati Sales Office.

Park Address: San Lorenzo South, City of Santa Rosa, Laguna • Makati Sales Office: G/F The Biltmore Condominium, 102 Aguirre Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City Telephone Numbers: 830-21-11 to 16, 812-72-32 and 867-10-06. Email: ekfireworks@yahoo.com.ph



The magic stays with you. www.enchantedkingdom.com.ph



Super's Inferno: A guide to the 9 circles of hell (and which of them to watch first)

By Pepe Diokno

SURE, YOU GOT A TON OF Bench shirts and "Marithe Francois Girbaud" gear this Christmas but we're also pretty sure that you got a couple hundred pesos from your *ninong* and *ninang*. Now, there are only three things you can do with that money: One, buy yourself more "Girbaud." Two, treat yourself to the penultimate thing-to-show-off-to-your-officemates-at-the-callcenter thing, a.k.a. a grande order at Starbucks. And three, give your money to priests.

The third option is the best option in the universe because priests will take your money and use it to advance the development of the country. Having said that, it's probable that priests will take your money and give to the ailing local film industry—which means priests will use your money to watch this year's crop of MMFF films. And that, dear Super readers, is a good thing—because only priests can perform exorcisms.

Now, we care for our priests—if we didn't have them, who else would tell the population where to stand on national issues? And so, we decided to help our priests by publishing this, Super's Inferno. Dante had his 9 circles of hell; this year we have nine films from hell. Prepare yourselves, dear priests—passing these circles isn't easy, and at the end lies the supreme challenge: Lucifer has decided to call himself Jose Javier Reyes. And he makes films! He makes films!

Circle I. "Mano Po 5: Gwa Ai Di"

In this circle, you'll see: a fight scene between Richard Gutierrez and Christian Bautista. I'm not kidding. Guess who gets the first slap in? It's you, going. (slaps forehead) What the f--- is this?

This movie in a nut-shell: So Christian Bautista is this international singer and Richard Gutierrez is this average Filipino guy, and Angel Locsin is this chick they all have the hots for. And—wait, it stopped being believable at the word, "average."

The twist this movie probably has in store for you: That Angel Locsin is actually a man. Who is not Chinese. Oh wait, no, that's not the twist yet. After this is revealed, Richard goes on a journey to find his brother, leaving Christian, who goes, "Yay" and runs off with Angel. See, this makes it a gay film, making it a shoe-in at international film festivals—Mother Lily is a smart woman y'all. Despite the way she looks.

Realization of the day... Mother Lily might just take that last paragraph and turn it into a 2007 MMFF entry.

Circle II. "Tatlong Baraha"

Three oppressed Filipinos during the Spanish regime—a cowardly farmer, a mentally challenged man, and a hunchback bellringer are blessed with special powers to help their fellowmen. There is no need to append a joke here.

In this circle, you'll meet: The entire Lapid clan and Phoenella Barranda.

Why you haven't heard of this movie: Lito Lapid's been busy do-



ing Senate work.

No s---it, Lito Lapid's still a senator? No s---it.

Watch out for a sequel! The Lapid are currently involved in a production called, "the demise of the Philippine government." Ok, I made up that title—you all know Lito only speaks Filipino on the Senate floor.

And, the real reason you haven't heard of this movie: Mother Lily.

Circle III. "Ligalig"

A taxi driver is invited to the house of his girlfriend to meet her family. At the same time, prostitutes are being murdered by a mysterious killer. This is the most obscure synopsis in Super history. Cesar Montano wins the "What the F---" award!

In this circle, you'll meet: Cesar Montano.

How to save on production costs tip# 324: Cast your wife.

Why action star/directors beat up their wives: Their wives upstage them.

Does the title of the movie sound like a thriller to you? No, it sounds like one of those artsy indie films with a one-word title and bad



production values... that tries too hard to reach its goal but fails.

Is this film like 'em indies? Honestly, what's the difference?

Circle IV. "Matakot Ka Sa Karma"

In this circle, you'll meet: Gretchen Barreto, Angelica Panganiban, and Rica Peralejo.

Number of segments this movie is made up of: Three.

Amount of creative juice it took to write each of these three episodes: None. Come on, the episodes are called, "Aparador," "Kama," and "Tokador"—that's



writer-director Joey Reyes looking around his room.

Watch out for the sequel! Jose Javier Reyes has a whole house full of items to make stories out of. His most personal household item, "My Vibrating Toothbrush."

Why priests need to exorcise the filmmakers: Pretty soon, writers are going to run out of inanimate objects to, um, animate, they're going to write a story involving the Sto. Niño. It's the Filipino version of "Chuckie!"

This film is so bad... even someone like Gretchen Barreto is re-retiring from showbiz after this movie.

Synopsis: In the film, there is an antique shop, which sells pieces of the furniture that come alive. The three episodes in this movie chronicle the havoc these pieces cause. And stuff.

Circle V. "Enteng Kabisote 3: The Legend Goes On and On"

Since the last time we saw Enteng, he has turned into a materialistic businessman. Meanwhile, an alien named Zarkov teams up with evil woman Satana and clones Enteng in order to ruin his relationship with wife, Faye. With the fate of the world in the real Enteng's hands—or not—he, in turn, teams up with Ina Magenta to fight Zarkov and Satana. Interesting. Very interesting.

In this circle, you'll meet: Vic Sotto, Kristine Hermosa, G Toengi, and Pia Guanio.

Why this movie is so artsy: Take Vic Sotto and Kristine Hermosa. Look, the use of an old, washed-up, past-his-prime, ugly, wrinkled, devoid-of-comic-timing, talentless actor is sooo anti-Classical Hollywood. And, the other one, Vic Sotto, is just divine.

Why this movie sells: People come to malls for the airconditioning. The ticket price for this film gives you that, a comfy seat, and the bubblegum feeling that no matter who you are in the States, you will always be a G Toengi in the Philippines. Always.

Circle VI. "Zsa Zsa Zaturannah: Zhe Movie"

A gay hairdresser discovers a giant rock that grants one superpowers when one swallows it. And he swallows it. With his superpowers, he takes on the persona of Zsa Zsa Zaturannah, and fights evil. With song and dance numbers.

In this circle, you'll meet: The embodiment of everything Joel Lamangan wishes he could be, henceforth, "Zsa Zsa."

The one thing you need to make a comedy sell in the Philippines: Gayness. Everyone laughs at gay people. I mean, you just have to look at them on TV, and you go nuts! Hahaha... hahaha... ha... Chokoleit. Hahaha... hahaha... Rustom Padilla.

Why I can't say anything bad about the movie: It's campy—it's supposed to be badly-made, slapstick, and predictable, and anyone who points that out is a pompous, humorless prick. Which I'm not.

Translation of the paragraph above: It's a Joel Lamangan movie, and anyone who says anything bad about a Joel Lamangan movie dies instantly.

Circle VII. "Super Noypi"

Six childhood friends learn that their parents are the most powerful superheroes in the land when their parents are taken hostage by a wicked super-villain. They then discover that they each possess their own super



powers... and yada yada yada...

In this circle, you'll meet: Jennylyn Mercado, Mark Herras, Sandara Park, someone named Andrew Mulach, and the entire force of Quark Henares' filmmaking ability. And that, all-in-all, amounts to nothing.

Watch this film if... You need inspiration for that Flash Animation assignment you have due at the start of school next year.

... and if you love... lapses in logic, plot holes, acting slightly better than the expressions brick walls give, and utter unoriginality.

But then again... maybe Quark Henares is going, (turn on French accent) "But that was my intention!" Ok, yeah. Quark Henares is brilliant—and his film students are so lucky. So lucky.

Circle VIII. "Shake, Rattle and Roll 8"

In this circle resides: Bearwin Meily.

Number of segments this movie is made up of: Three.

Why that sounds familiar: There's that other horror flick, um, "Matakot Ka Sa Karma?"

Why they will never make enough of these films: Can you really think of another movie title that expresses horror and comedy at the same time? Oh wait, there's "Matakot Ka Sa Karma."

Why it's up for best picture: The Filipino industry just won't be the same without "Shake, Rattle and Roll." It'd be... better. And no one in mainstream Filipino film industry wants "better." That's like... bad.

Yo Filipino audience is so dumb... "Shake, Rattle and Roll" is grossing so much just because of name recall.

One episode, "13th Floor" covers a group of party organizers tasked to arrange a children's party at the 13th floor of a new condominium. And, 'cause it's on the 13th floor, all hell breaks loose. Duh. Another episode, "Yaya," tells of a naughty little boy who discovers his nanny is a vampire. In "LRT," train passengers are stranded when a creature breaks loose and tries to eat them.

Circle IX. "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo"

Though Jed and Angie are an unlikely couple, they seem to be madly in love with each other. So when Jed's parents force him to migrate to the US, he proposes to Angie. But hasty wedding preparations, and conflict between Jed's and Angie's families, make them realize that married life isn't what it's like in fairy tales.

In this circle, you'll meet: Ariel Ureta. And yes, Juday and Ryan.

Why this movie's in this year's festival: Star Cinema couldn't find believable, non-controversial love interests for Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby. Yeah, only Mother Lily has the balls to go the homo route—the b*tch is brave. Gabby Lopez, you sissy.

The ugly, ugly truth: This movie actually isn't bad. Gina Pareno's in it.

Translation of the line above: It's a formula movie—the only way you can ever go wrong with that is if you're Joel Lamangan. Or Quark Henares.

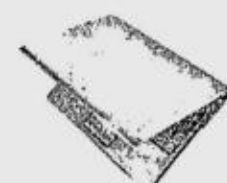
(Editor's note: Opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the entire staff of Super and this publication.)

Compaq recommends Windows® XP Professional.



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Sleek. Sculpted. Powerful. The new HP Compaq Presario V3194TU Notebook PC powered by Intel® Centrino® Duo Mobile Technology with Intel® Core™ 2 Duo Processor delivers impressive multitasking performance wherever you roam. In creating this modern masterpiece, HP invented a state-of-the-art moulding technique to create the industrial brushed gunmetal casing, which offers greater scratch resistance than traditional painted casings. And if you are looking for more innovative design features, try the latchless magnetic closure and touch-sensitive buttons that let you launch and control your digital media without booting up. So, whatever way you look at it, this is a tool that's designed to impress.



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There are, of course, plenty of other interesting books that have been recommended both before and after the release of *What the Hell Did I Do to You?* But this is not a book that can be recommended in the easy, go-to, and unobjectionable manner that *Good Vibrations* of Lindsay Lohan has. It's a different, thoughtful, and also a little more interesting of a book. It's a book that should be read by both sides of the aisle.

2. Choc and YvetteReligioso
3. John Paras
4. John Herrera
5. Chris Diaz
6. Debbie Co
7. Czarina Villa
8. Ferdi Abuel

This is the year when Filipinos are really going for their own, as the Filipino designers have created their own niche. These are the names that people will be wearing in 2007. Today's new names are tomorrow's big brands.

27 people to watch out for in 2007



Tim Yap

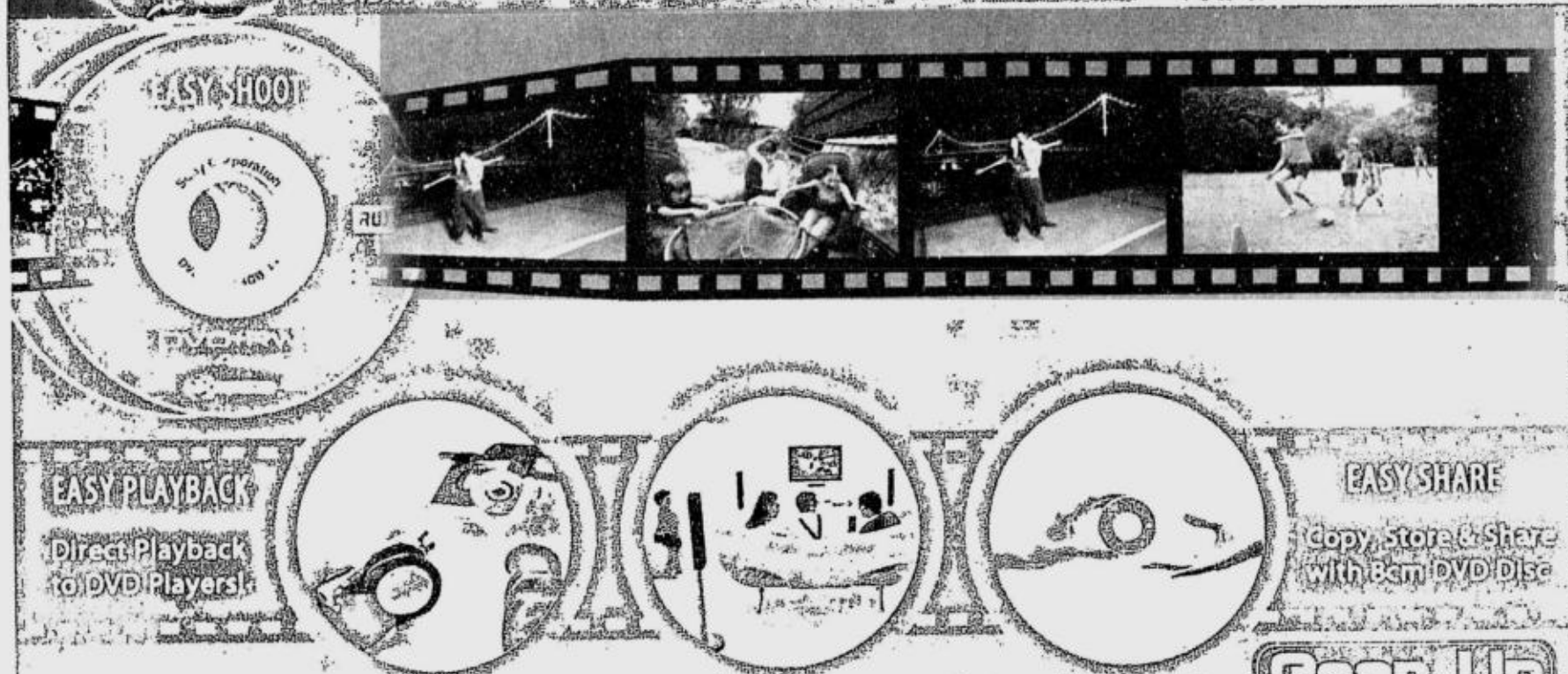


But hey, pressure is good for you. It pushes you to go beyond your comfort zone and tells you that you can do better. That you can be a better person. That you can lead a better life. For others.

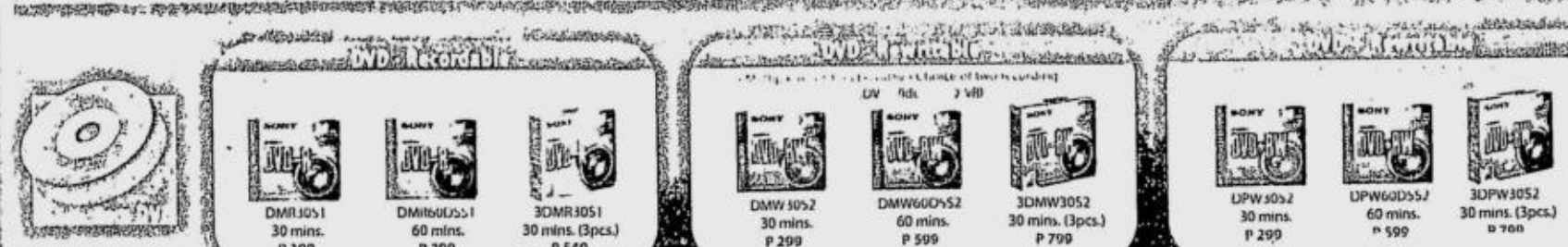
27 PEOPLE/ D3



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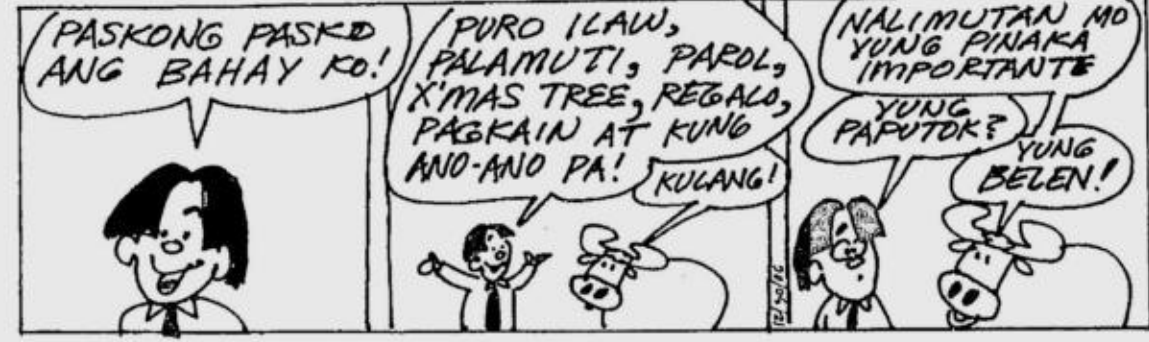
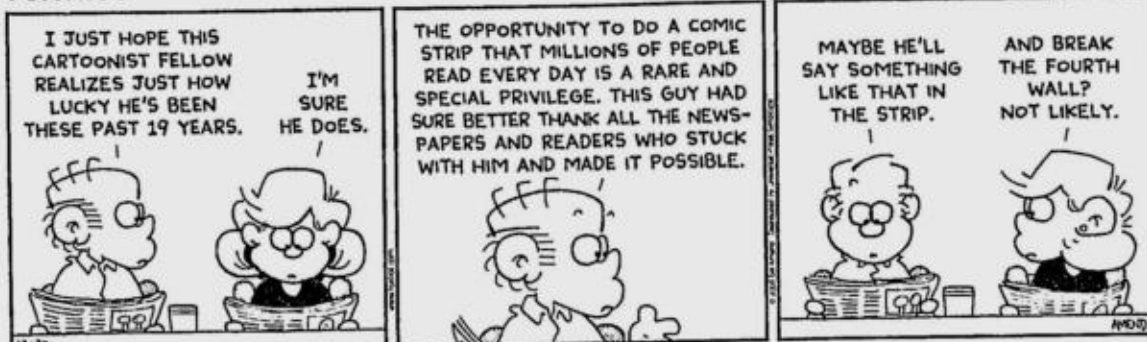
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4098 Series of 2006

FOX TROT

BY BILL AMEND

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

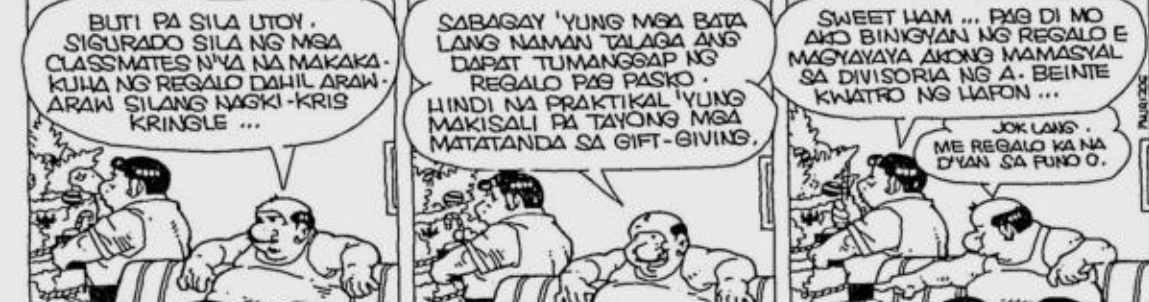


BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY

BY RM. JUNIOR



MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

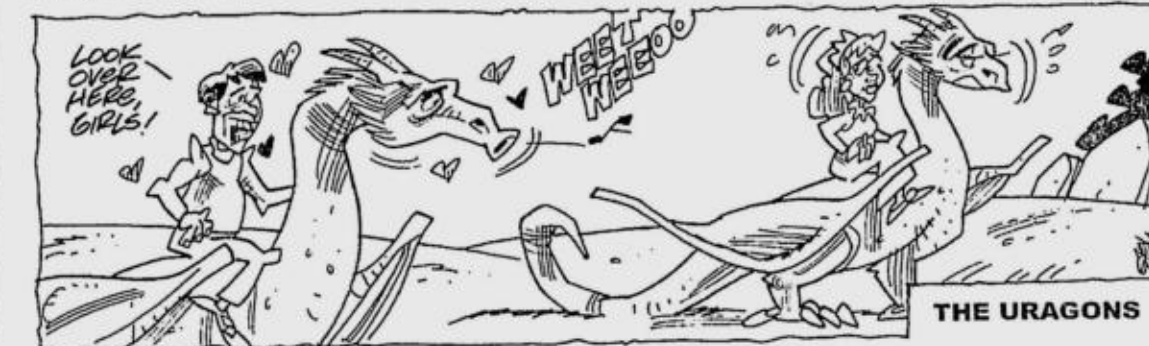


ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

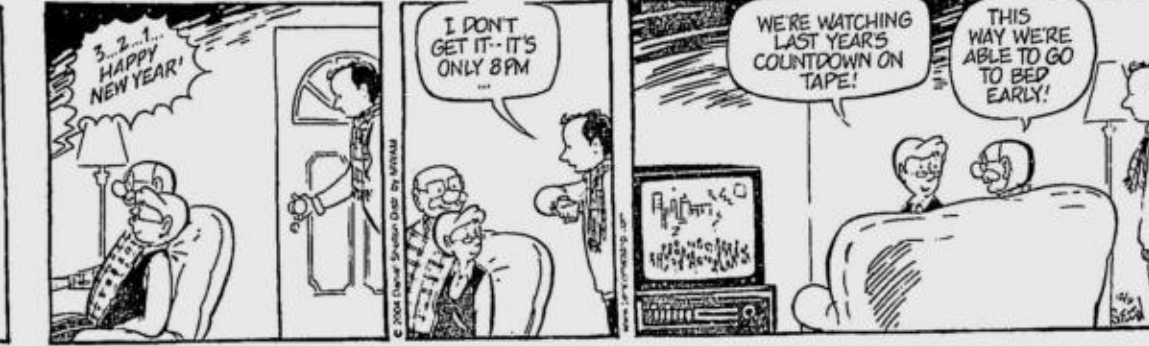
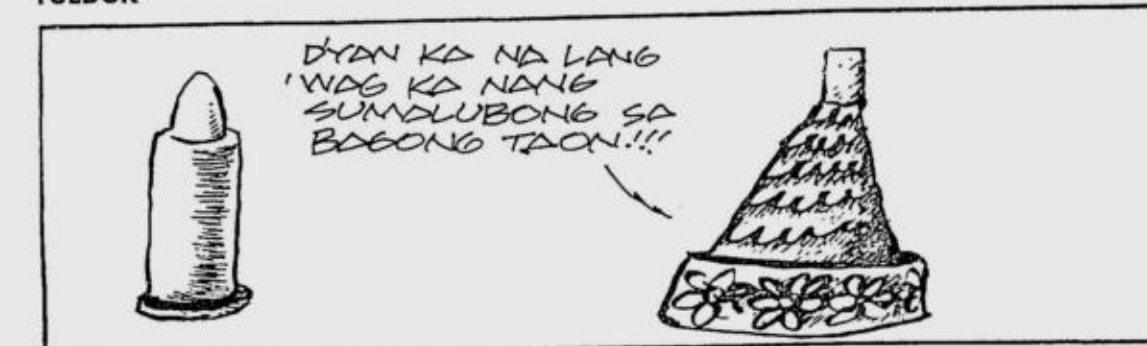


TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

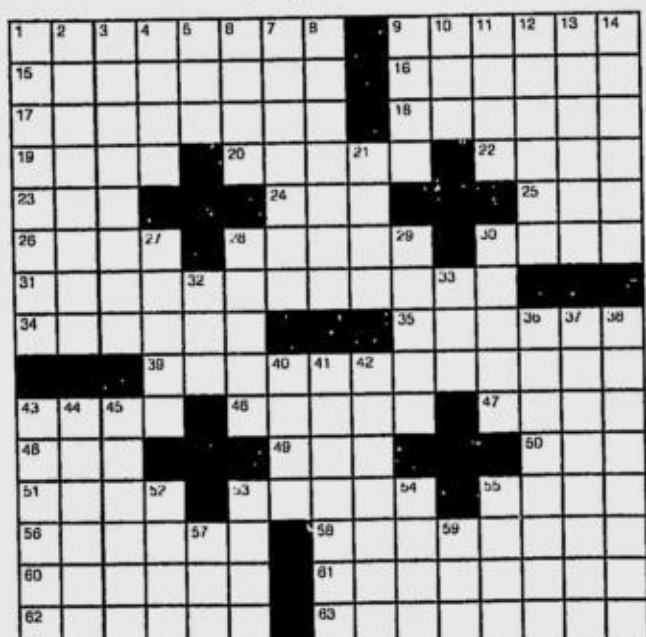


DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

- ACROSS**
- Decreased
 - Rooftop structure
 - Out of jail, with strings attached?
 - Spoke pompously
 - Wine from a single type of grape
 - Last call for a volunteer
 - Actor Jannings
 - In a slanting position
 - Covers with turf
 - DDE's rank
 - Land in the Seine?
 - Allow to
 - Contingencies: abbr.
 - Glitches
 - French mother
 - Quaker building
 - Mistakes list
 - Chilled dessert
 - Taking back
 - Wound sign
 - Pilot
 - Elbe tributary
 - Small amount
 - IRS concern
 - Dundee denial
 - Last of a switch?
 - Italian geothermal pioneer
 - 5th Avenue store
 - Water-carved gully
 - Marijuana
 - Person with a financial burden
 - Signer-on
 - Four-door cars
 - Rotten eggs
- DOWN**
- Easy win in tennis
 - Cloisone creator
 - Short-distance runner
 - Spinnaker, e.g.
 - Before, poetically
 - bene
 - Making joyful
 - Samson's undoer
 - Checked garment
 - Thirty-cup container
 - Picks up the tab
 - "My Favorite Year" star
 - Bank, at times
 - "Fideles"
 - Toy block maker
 - Ringo or Bart
 - Loses one's cool
 - Euphrates region
 - Verdun's river
 - Israel or Jacob follower
 - Distress signal
 - Like a cast or contract?
 - More furtive
 - Ways out
 - Bologna eight
 - Otherworldly sessions
 - Navigational instrument
 - Swipes
 - First King novel
 - Idolized
 - Ms. Chaplin
 - Michael D. and Sebastian
 - Calvary initials
 - Polio vaccine developer
 - Hankering
 - Negative prefix



By Tom Pruca
Chicago, IL

12/30/06

Friday's Puzzle Solved



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YOU BORN TODAY: You're down-to-earth, practical and realistic. You like efficiency and productivity. However, you also enjoy good times with friends. Because you hate chaotic, messy situations, you often simplify and streamline your life. You're generous with your time and your possessions. You can look forward to a pleasant, social year ahead. New friendships and romance are blessed.
Birthdate of: Meredith Vieira, TV host; Tiger Woods, golfer; Bo Diddley, songwriter, musician.



ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Think twice before you make major decisions concerning money and possessions and how these relate to friends or children. You might be confused or too restricted in your notion of things.



TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Don't place too much importance on discussions with bosses or parents today. Misunderstandings are possible. Someone might also needlessly discourage you. (Ignore this.)



GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Some days we feel our glass is half-empty, some days we feel it's half-full. Our perception of things has a lot to do with our mood. Your pessimism today will be gone by tomorrow.



CANCER (June 21 to July 22): If a friend or a particular situation seems to discourage you today, don't take it seriously. This is just a passing dark cloud on your horizon.



LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Discussions with parents, VIPs, teachers and bosses will not go well today. Avoid them if you can. Wait until another day to approach these people. (Oh, yeah.)



VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): News from afar or perhaps something related to publishing and higher education is confusing today. Now you're not sure what to do. (If you're not sure what to do, don't act.)



LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): When it comes to discussions about children, vacations or anything connected with romance and love affairs, you might feel perplexed and confused today. Don't worry. This is just a temporary thing today.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a not a good day to make major decisions with partners. You're not sure exactly what to do. Someone older might try to discourage you. Just let it go.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Avoid important decisions today. You don't feel like a winner; your confidence is low. Furthermore, daydreaming or just general confusion might negatively impact your job.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a poor day to make important financial decisions (even shopping could be dicey). Don't let money worries grab you by the throat. This feeling is gone by tomorrow.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Avoid important family discussions today. People feel discouraged and listless, as well as confused! Therefore, tread carefully.



PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might spend today daydreaming or avoiding unpleasant people or duties. Don't worry about this. Just cope as best you can. Tomorrow is another day.

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

9	7							
3	1				9	2	7	
					6		4	
					2	7	9	
3	5	7						
5		6						
8	3	1					2	4
							6	3

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

12/30

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	6	7	3	4	1	2	5	9
2	4	3	8	5	9	1	6	7
1	5	9	6	2	7	3	8	4
6	9	1	2	7	8	5	4	3
5	7	4	1	3	6	8	9	2
3	2	8	5	9	4	6	7	1
4	8	6	7	1	2	9	3	5
7	1	5	9	6	3	4	2	8
9	3	2	4	8	5	7	1	6

Difficulty Level ★★★★★



9. Say Alonzo

After a long hiatus, the former *Pinoy Big Brother* winner is back in the Philippines. With his new album, *Wag Mo Lang*, Say is looking to make a comeback in the music industry. He's also been spotted in a new movie, *Ang Babae sa Baybayin*, which is set to be released in 2007. Expect to see him in Super!



10. Paolo Lorenzana

In this city where members of the media are a dime a dozen, wordsmiths are hard to find. One young writer has Super! radar on extra alert mode. Paolo Lorenzana is THE young writer to read. He now takes the reins as the new associate editor of *Manual* magazine and you'll soon see him in Super!



11. Nicole Yulo

After a long hiatus, the former *Pinoy Big Brother* winner is back in the Philippines. With his new album, *Wag Mo Lang*, Say is looking to make a comeback in the music industry. He's also been spotted in a new movie, *Ang Babae sa Baybayin*, which is set to be released in 2007. Expect to see him in Super!



12. Vhong Navarro

After giving life to "Gagamboy" and "Mr. Suave," this year he relives the part of iconic Pinoy James Bond prototype Tony Falcon. Expect the resurgence of posh-all-white-ensembles that have catapulted Falcon to fame—but this time, with Vhong wearing the designer duds (armed with a bevy of beauties of course) and playing with his gadgets. Expect Vhong to go up, up, and away! (oops, wrong superhero.)



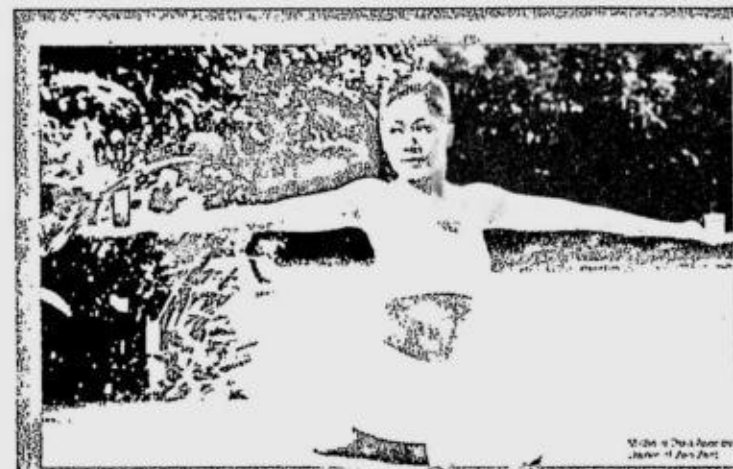
13. Chad o' Pinoy Dream Academy

After a long hiatus, the former *Pinoy Big Brother* winner is back in the Philippines. With his new album, *Wag Mo Lang*, Say is looking to make a comeback in the music industry. He's also been spotted in a new movie, *Ang Babae sa Baybayin*, which is set to be released in 2007. Expect to see him in Super!



14. Kabbalah in Manila

The Rockwell Loft was filled with a mix of scene shakers but it was not for a party. It was to listen to David Ghiyam, from LA's Kabbalah Center who was here in Manila to talk about "relationships and the purpose of your life." He returns this January to give a one-month seminar that goes deeper into the mystic Kabbalah. Judging from the night's turnout that had personalities like Juddha Paolo, Teresa Herrera, Claudine Trillo and Erik Menk all listening intently to David, it seems like Kabbalah has found a new home in Manila.



15. Michelle Asence

After a long hiatus, the former *Pinoy Big Brother* winner is back in the Philippines. With his new album, *Wag Mo Lang*, Say is looking to make a comeback in the music industry. He's also been spotted in a new movie, *Ang Babae sa Baybayin*, which is set to be released in 2007. Expect to see him in Super!

27 people to watch out for in 2007

From page D1

Now that I've channeled my inner Oprah, let me present to you, in Super! crystal ball fashion, our annual list for those who will land in this year's honor roll. Here are Super!'s 27 people to watch out for in 2007.

Get your checkbooks ready (yes, it's 2 days to go till 2007) and remember these 27 topbillers.



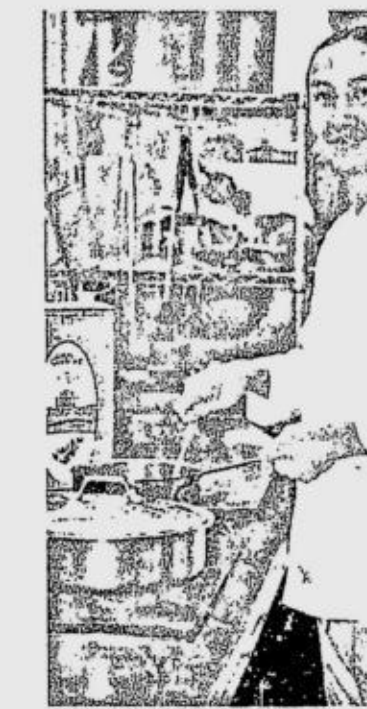
16. Gian Magdangal and Mau Marcelo of Philippine Idol

In a country of singers, they emerged on the top of people's consciousness, deserving of the term "Idol." They've proven that they can sing—now the challenge is to make sure their stars continue to shine and for them to raise the bar in Philippine music by singing original compositions penned by Pinoy songmakers.



17. Marites Allen

After a long hiatus, the former *Pinoy Big Brother* winner is back in the Philippines. With his new album, *Wag Mo Lang*, Say is looking to make a comeback in the music industry. He's also been spotted in a new movie, *Ang Babae sa Baybayin*, which is set to be released in 2007. Expect to see him in Super!



18. Chef Rolly Laudico

He will be remembered in food history as one of the prime movers of Pinoy nouvelle cuisine now. His Bistro Filipino at the Net Center at the Fort is fearless when it comes to Chef Laudico's innovations—*sinigang* in martini glasses, cone-shaped *turon*s and more. His lovely wife Jackie makes the most to-die-for-then-live-again desserts that will make you forget media noche and the morning after. Chef Lau, you da man!



19. Violito Payla

After a long hiatus, the former *Pinoy Big Brother* winner is back in the Philippines. With his new album, *Wag Mo Lang*, Say is looking to make a comeback in the music industry. He's also been spotted in a new movie, *Ang Babae sa Baybayin*, which is set to be released in 2007. Expect to see him in Super!



20. Mario Cornejo

This "I Am Super!" Awardee proved himself not just "Indie" when he broke box office records with his "First Day High" movie. And in this town, nobody loves you more than when you can mix artistry and commerce. Now, producers are lining up for his follow-up projects, but he'd rather be choosy—because he can.



21. Driven Manila

After a long hiatus, the former *Pinoy Big Brother* winner is back in the Philippines. With his new album, *Wag Mo Lang*, Say is looking to make a comeback in the music industry. He's also been spotted in a new movie, *Ang Babae sa Baybayin*, which is set to be released in 2007. Expect to see him in Super!



22. John Pagaduan of Shu Uemura

He started out idolizing Shu Uemura chief makeup maven Xeng Zulueta, so he approached her at one party to apply for a job, and he got it. Now the favorite of glossy gals, John has his hands (and makeup brushes) full beautifying fashion's A-list. Watch him grab his own A-list beauty spot.



23. Florabel Go

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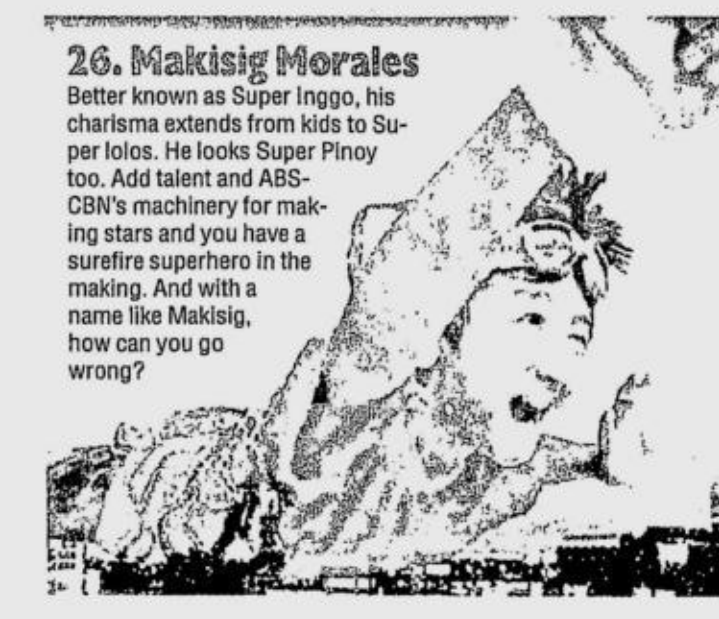
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10. Paolo Lorenzana

In this city where members of the media are a dime a dozen, wordsmiths are hard to find. One young writer has Super! on radar on extra alert mode. Paolo Lorenzana is THE young writer to read. He now takes the reins as the new associate editor of Manual magazine and you'll soon see him in Super!



11. Nicole Yulo

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14. Kabbalah in Manila

The Rockwell Loft was filled with a mix of scene shakers but it was not for a party. It was to listen to David Ghiyam, from LA's Kabbalah Center who was here in Manila to talk about "relationships and the purpose of your life." He returns this January to give a one-month seminar that goes deeper into the mystic Kabbalah. Judging from the night's turnout that had personalities like Juddha Paolo, Teresa Herrera, Claudine Trillo and Erik Menk all listening intently to David, it seems like Kabbalah has found a new home in Manila.



15. Michelle Asencio

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27 people to watch out for in 2007

From page D1

Now that I've channeled my inner Oprah, let me present to you, in Super! crystal ball fashion, our annual list for those who will land in this year's honor roll. Here are Super!'s 27 people to watch out for in 2007.

Get your checkbooks ready (yes, it's 2 days to go till 2007) and remember these 27 topbillers.



16. Gian Magdangal and Mau Marcelo of Philippine Idol

In a country of singers, they emerged on the top of people's consciousness, deserving of the term "idol." They've proven that they can sing—now the challenge is to make sure their stars continue to shine and for them to raise the bar in Philippine music by singing original compositions penned by Pinoy songmakers.



17. Marites Ali

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He will be remembered in food history as one of the prime movers of Pinoy nouvelle cuisine now. His Bistro Filipino at the Net Center at the Fort is fearless when it comes to Chef Laudico's innovations—*sinigang* in martini glasses, cone-shaped *turon*s and more. His lovely wife Jackie makes the most to-die-for-then-live-again desserts that will make you forget media noche and the morning after. Chef Lau, you da man!



19. Yolito Payla

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20. Mario Cornejo

This "I Am Super!" Awardee proved himself not just "indie" when he broke box office records with his "First Day High" movie. And in this town, nobody loves you more than when you can mix artistry and commerce. Now, producers are lining up for his follow-up projects, but he'd rather be choosy—because he can.



21. Andrew Mania

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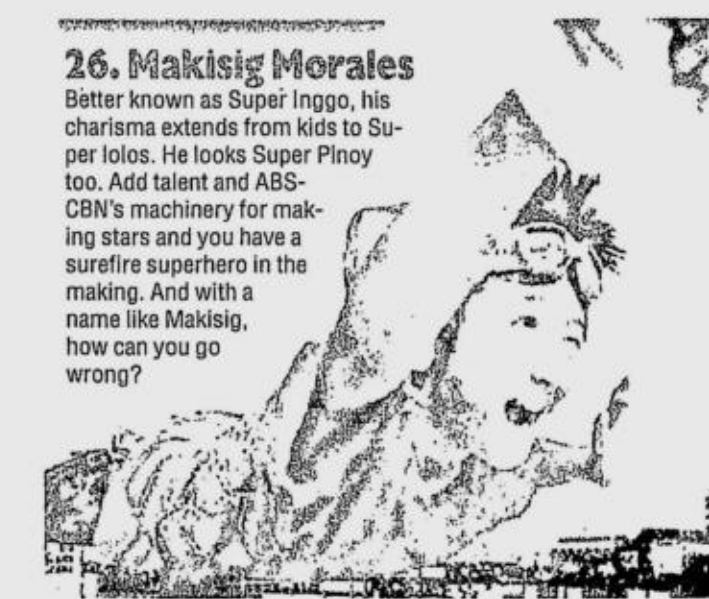
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We'll take you farther.



Ho ho, Mo Mo!

By Tim Yap
Photos by Dingo Guevarra

BLESSED WITH THE AIR OF a generation gap, socialable babbler Maurice Arcache blew his candles at his 40th birthday party, looking as young as he did. He was surrounded by more than 100 guests, many of whom were his friends and family. The party was held at the Shangri-La Hotel, where Maurice and his wife, Vicky, celebrated their anniversary. The party was a success, with many guests enjoying the food and drinks. Maurice was the寿星 (birthday star) of the occasion, and he was the center of attention. He was surrounded by his friends and family, and he was the life of the party. He was the寿星 (birthday star) of the occasion, and he was the center of attention. He was surrounded by his friends and family, and he was the life of the party.

BIRTHDAY BOY: MAURICE ARCACHE AND HIS CHOCOLATE SHANGRI-LA

BEAUTY HILL: PEPPER TEE, HANKEE, CAROL MASBAY AND MARY ANN LUMEN

FUN CHUMS: JENNI EPPERSON AND PATRICK REYNO

FASHION JUNGLES: LEIC FANG AND MARY ANN LUMEN

CLICKS AND THE CITY: TONY TUNG, JOJO JOHNSON AND KATHY DE GUZMAN

WINGS: ANTON MENDOZA, MARY ANN LUMEN AND LEIC FANG

SMILING & SENSATIONS: SAMUEL AND BOBBY CARRASCO

BEAUTY SCHOOL PLUS: INA ZI HORA AND JOEM BARRANDA

TOGETHER FOREVER: CHICHO SUAREZ AND GRIEYES

PERFECT SHAPE: IDRA VICA BULO, TIM HAP AND HAYDEN REED

SUPPERCILL: LINDA LA GUARDIA, LORRY HANSEN, EDWIN CULL, JOJO JOHNSON, TONY TUNG AND VICKY ARCACHE

METROPOLITAN: MARY ANN LUMEN AND BOBBY CARRASCO

SEX, DRINK & DANCE: LEE

MOST BEACONIC: UNILACROS AND KATHY DE GUZMAN

CHOCOLATE: BENJAMIN AND HAYDEN REED

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Ho ho, Mo Mo!

By Tim Yap

A generation gap

ASIAN HIGH SPIRITS: NOEL ONATE, VICKY ZUBIRI WITH MAURICE ARCACHE

ALL IN THE FAMILY: SANDER, SIMON AND MONS TANTOCO

THREE'S COMPANY: MARCO LOPEZ, MARIPUSCA AND JOHNNY VELASQUEZ

FAMILY REUNION: MICHAEL, SUNSHINE, JOE AND LILIBETH DELA CRUZ

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: MAURICE ARCACHE WITH TIM YAP

BURGLY DUO: LOANIE REYNOLDS AND SUSAN REYES

BEAUTY HILL: PEPPER TEE, HANKEE, CAROL MASBAY AND MARY ANN LUMEN

FASHIONABLE: LEONARDO CAMPOS AND MARIO CAMPOS

FUN CHUMS: JENNI EPPERSON AND PATRICK REYNOLDS

FIDELITY STORY: THOMAS AND PATRICK SANTOS

BLOOMING: CARLA TENCONO

THE ESSENCE OF BEAUTY: RHODA CAMPOS

SHINE PER: SMILE, YENG ZULUETA

TOGETHER FOREVER: JIMMY, SUAREZ AND GRAYES

PERFECT SHAPES: JIMMY, SUAREZ AND GRAYES

SUPER SIX: ALBERTO, LOUI, NINA, LAGUNA, LOUI, NINA, LAGUNA, LOUI, NINA, LAGUNA

BEAUTY SCHOOL PLUS: INA, ZAMORA AND JOEM BARRANDA

METROPOLITAN: JIMMY, SUAREZ AND GRAYES

SEXY BACK: DINA LEE

MOST VICIOUS: NINA, LAGUNA, LOUI, NINA, LAGUNA, LOUI, NINA, LAGUNA

DELICIOUS: JIMMY, SUAREZ AND GRAYES

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AFTER THE TALENT SEARCH IS OVER

Now, the really hard work begins

By Nestor U. Torre

TELEVISION HAS launched many talent searches that have produced scores of winners. All have been decreed and officially crowned "stars of tomorrow," but only a few succeed in becoming certified show biz luminaries who can sell albums and headline hit shows.

What happens to the also-rans? Some drop out, but others keep plugging, hoping to make it the second time around—like Jennifer Hudson with "Dreamgirls."

Musical

But not many musical movies are being produced, so the non-Jennifers have to find other ways to keep performing and putting food on the table.

For these struggling many, a new source of income has presented itself of late: Private parties and company functions. Those performances may not get much mileage in the media, but they pay much more than just a pretty penny.

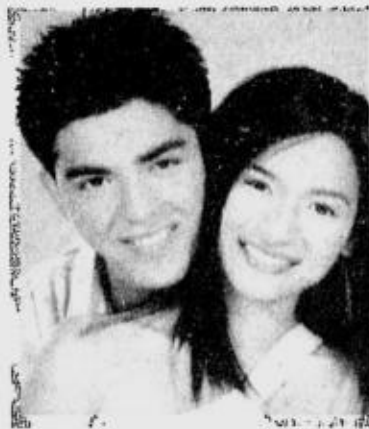
For instance, the first American Idol, Kelly Clarkson, gets a really cool \$300,000 for performing at somebody's party! Last year's winner, Taylor Hicks, rates "only" \$150,000, while Ruben Studdard makes do with \$75,000 a pop.

However you look at it, those are big bucks and add up to a very tidy annual income for former Idols and their runners-up!

Profitable

On the local show biz front, private performances have always been a profitable row to hoe even for singers who aren't big stars. We know of some middle-level names who rate P80,000 for three songs—and they're performing all over the place, so they're really raking it in.

In terms of local talent searches, it looks like "Starstruck" has the best record for actually producing stars instead of just winners.



HERRAS AND MERCADO.
Winners who have become certified stars.

GMA-7's pioneering talent tilt has made stars of the likes of Mark Herras, Jennylyn Mercado, Marky Cielo, Katrina Halili and Iwa Moto.

These young stars are as busy as bees on TV and in the movies—proof positive that "Starstruck's" starmaking process works. Other tilts haven't been as productive, sad to say, so they have a lot to learn from GMA's signature talent search.

One major factor is efficient follow-through. Some tilts content themselves with producing winners, without strategically lining up work and build-up activities for them, so they eventually fail to get their stellar careers going.

Consistency

Also key is consistency. For instance, Sandara Park and Hero Angeles were major finds some years ago, but they misused their advantage, and their careers faltered.

It's a good thing that Sandara is currently staging a comeback of sorts, but Hero has to hustle much more to get back on track—that is, if he's still interested.

The wonderment is, after practically killing themselves to come out on top, talents and TV networks suddenly take the winning for granted and presume that the champion's promised stardom is a sure thing.

Alas, winning is only the start of a very long process, and nothing is assured until the winner proves to be a hard worker, and his sponsoring TV station is prepared to back him up—all the way to the actualization of the promised, stellar pot of gold at the end of the show biz rainbow!

Year-end wish list for the TV industry

By Behn Cervantes

I WISH THAT THE influential TV medium would resolve to accomplish these improvements in 2007:

1. Could the stations' big-wigs remind themselves of the influence they have on the audience, especially the youth?

Good values

They should produce more positive youth-oriented shows that inculcate good values in the young.

What's happened to traditional Filipino values that set us apart as a people only a few decades ago?

2. Why must entertainment have a sexual connotation at every turn? Why can't we have variety shows without sexy dancers gyrating on them all the time? Do we wonder why young girls dream of becoming Japayukis and GROs later on?

3. Could newscasters relay the news without biased opinions, and minus the

YEAR-END/E2

And to think this would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of Master Danongan K...
to see, paving the now and these traditions lost forever.

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Mitchell-Velaso...
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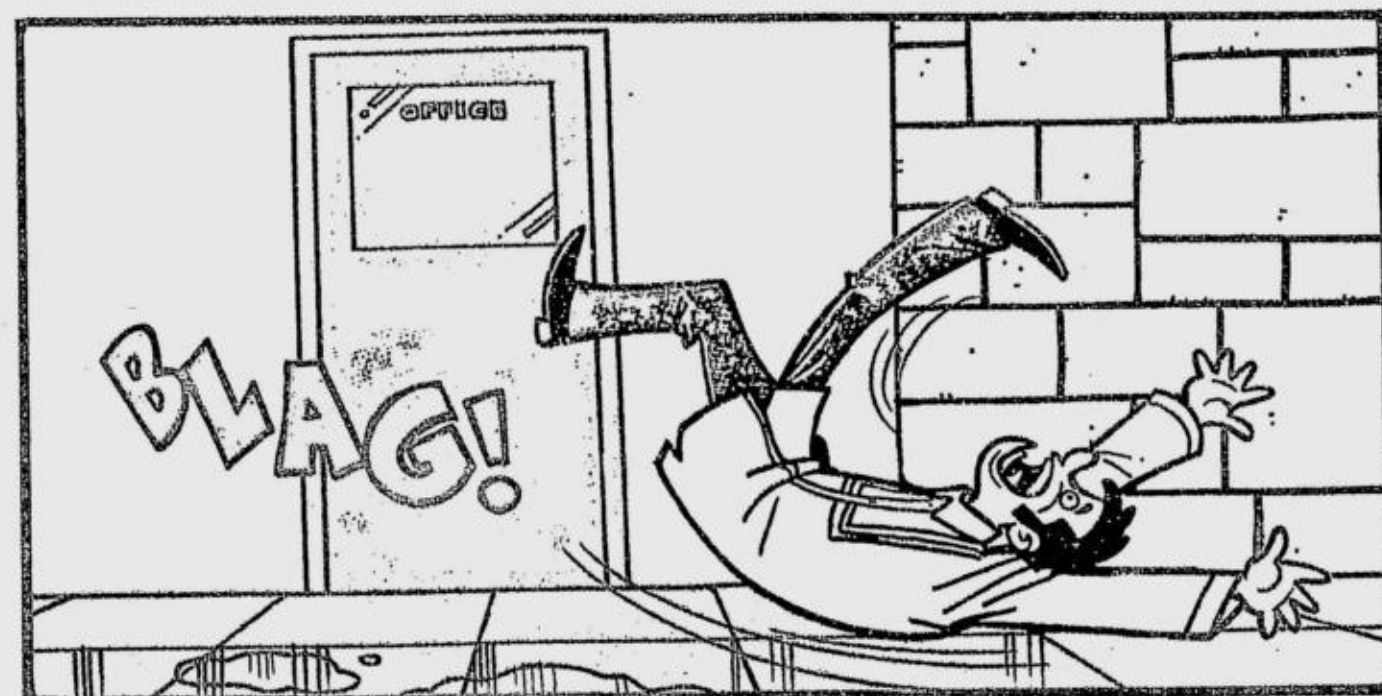
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8: KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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2: KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3: ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4: MANO PO 5

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2: MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
3: TATLONG BARAHA
4: ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
5: ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6: KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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2: ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3: KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4: TATLONG BARAHA

VISAYAS

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4: ENTENG KABISOTE 3
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8: SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

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3: TATLONG BARAHA
4: KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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2: TATLONG BARAHA
3: LIGALIG
4: ENTENG KABISOTE 3

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5: MANO PO 5
6: SUPER NOYPI

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For DP: NCSP Permit No. SP-1 Series of 2006

2 SATURDAYSpecial

'Imbestigador' shows harsh ASPECTS OF LIVES LIVED ON THE edge

By Lilia Borlongan-Alvarez

YOU MIGHT THINK YOU'VE already seen everything on "Dr. Phil" about physical, verbal and psychological abuse, but that's nothing compared to what was shown recently on "Imbestigador," hosted by Mike Enriquez on Channel 7.

More than graphically depicting society's many ills, the series shows how twisted values can leave emotional scars on our loved ones and adversely affect other people, as well.

Footage

In one of its recent episodes, the program showed how a woman beat up her paralyzed husband. When she left their shanty for work, one of her two young children took over the abusive practice by pouring hot water on her father and pounding his knees and feet with a hammer!

The next scene showed the wife dragging her emaciated husband by the arm while he lay naked outside their residence.

It took some time for their neighbors to find the courage to report this atrocity to the authorities. The battered man was then taken to a hospital, where he was diagnosed to have suffered a stroke. He



ENRIQUEZ. Hosts the searing public affairs show.

and her mother, who complained about a tabloid using her near-naked photo without permission. But, the mother did not complain about how the glossy magazine had exploited her daughter!

True, it was a case of copyright infringement, but that's beside the point. Instead, the mother got a mouthful from the editors of the tabloid: Her daughter, she was lectured, should stop posing semi-nude for any publication!

In other "Imbestigador" episodes, unfinished and substandard roads and bridges were featured. Documents were shown attesting to the fact that government funds intended for their construction were pocketed by corrupt politicians!

Destitute man

Another episode featured a destitute man who sold one of his eyes for an amount that wasn't enough to feed him for two years! It was enough to make our blood boil.

"Imbestigador" has shown man's cruelty and indifference. Filipinos brag about our being the "only Christian nation in Asia"—but, piety has nothing to do with how we treat our neighbors and loved ones, or how we live our faith. It's a sad truth: Some Christians are a disgrace to one another.

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1	KASAL KASALI KASALO	1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
	PG-13	
2	MANO PO 5	12:50, 3:20, 5:50, 8:25, 11:00
	G	
3	ENTENG KABISOTE 3	12:50, 3:15, 5:50, 8:25, 11:00
	G	
4	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8	1:35, 4:30, 7:25, 10:20
	PG-13	

Year-end wish list for the TV industry

From page E1

- grunts and wisecracks?
4. Could stations spend their money on productions with local talents, stories and aspirations? As a frustrated friend once stated, "Never mind the international, national is enough!" I agree. Programs we now view from Taipei, Korea and elsewhere may have meaning there, but they make little sense here. They confuse our young.
5. American viewers do not take Jerry Springer and Maury Povich seriously. So, why are vulgar and gimmicky hosts given time on national television? Springer and Povich's shows make promiscuity and crass behavior acceptable. Note that the disgruntled parties in those two talk shows are constantly "bleeped" because of vulgar language. Who needs shows like these? Certainly not the local audience!
6. Could TV's bigwigs create talent shows that encourage original talents, and not mere copycats of foreign stars? There's no doubt we have great talents. So, why don't we urge them to express themselves their own way?

Composers

To begin with, why don't we encourage them to sing local compositions? After all, it's a simple case of supply and demand. If local talents don't demand domestic compositions, why would our composers create songs like "Anak," "Kay Ganda ng Ating Musika," "Kapantay ay Langit," "Bituing Walang Ningning" and "Kastilyong Buhangin?"

Imelda Marcos and Teodoro Valencia made a concerted effort decades ago to popularize local music, which resulted in the creation of hundreds of musical gems now known as Pinoy Pop.

The move brought about serious interest in our own music and culture. Let's not forget that we likewise have "Dahil sa 'Yo'" and hundreds of other kundiman just waiting to be interpreted by today's youth.

7. I wish screaming gays on television would stop their cheap behavior once and for all. They are perpetuating the stereotypical notion that all gays are noisy, silly and, therefore, should not be taken seriously.

8. Stop cultivating the culture of gossip.

9. Stop the culture of patronage via those "charity" shows.

Value of labor

10. Stop depicting the culture of mendicancy. Instead, teach the poor how to fish, and inculcate in the young the value of labor.

11. Television should inspire pride in a culture that empowers its people to stand independently. With globalization, the power of TV should be harnessed so that we can realize our place in the sun.

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NOW SHOWING

Sarah takes a welcome breather

By Rito P. Asilo

IN SARAH GERONIMO'S LATEST ALBUM, "Becoming," the teen queen shows uncommon restraint and maturity. In the lineup's radio-friendly first track, "I Still Believe in Loving You," for instance, her strong, gliding interpretation showcases the song's beautiful melody without her usual angsty, chest-powered shrieking. In fact, for the tune's final last notes, she even uses a lovely head tone.

Original tracks

Made up mostly of original tracks that display her beautiful pipes, Geronimo's album experiments with different sounds: There's the upbeat, pop-powered "Iingatan Ko"; the Latin-tinged "You Mean the World to Me"; the jazzy "After Love"; the tweener-like tunes, "And I'm in Love Again" and "Baby Blue"; the dance track, "Don't You Worry"; and the inspirational "Peace Is All We Know."

Fans who are used to hearing Sarah singing soulful ballads won't be disappointed with "Magiliwanag Rin Muli," "Kaibigan," "Alaala Mo" and the beautiful "Carry My Love."

While the album isn't completely successful (a third of the songs are melodically and lyrically undistinctive), it's nevertheless heartening to hear Sarah spreading her musical wings by trying new types of songs that wouldn't have been considered in the lineup of her showy first albums.

Most singers these days take the fastest route to Hitsville by waxing one revival after another. After all, it's easier to promote songs that have easy recall. So, it really takes



GERONIMO. Spreads her musical wings.

courage—and a sense of adventure—to release a mostly-original collection of songs for pop music's hard-to-please fans.

Career trajectory

This healthy career trajectory is a welcome breather for the teen queen, who has of late been churning out well-sung and popular—but not necessarily better—remakes of songs like "Bituing Walang Ningning."

In a few years, it would be great to hear Sarah sing more local classics—from *kundiman* to pop hits of the '70s and '80s. For now, however, let us allow the pretty singing champ to experiment with songs that are perfect for her age.

A new horizon for M.Y.M.P.

By Remy Umerez

M.Y.M.P.'s JURIS FERNANDEZ and Chin Alcantara have a new album, "New Horizon," with songs evincing their maturity as songwriters.

"New Horizon," their third album, features the lead single, "With You." The other half of the album, which consists of covers, includes the popular track, "Only Reminds Me of You."

Blessings

Juris contributes two new songs: The lead track, "With You," and "Sa Yo Lamang." Juris couldn't be happier these days. She confesses: "I'm thankful for all the blessings that God has given me—family, friends,

and the special someone whom I share my feelings with."

Chin still does M.Y.M.P.'s musical arrangements. He co-wrote the song, "Forever and a Day." He shares: "I'm pleased with the quality of work that we've done on this record. We even have a Christmas single ('Soon It's Christmas')."

The carrier song, "With You," is a soothing, mid-tempo pop tune. They also cover Madonna's "Crazy For You," the Jets' "You Got It All," Starship's "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now," and the Police's "Every Breath You Take."

Other notable cuts include remakes of Paul Petersen's "Only Reminds Me of You" and Allure's "Last Chance."

Time to reflect

THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW Year: "The coming of a new year

is a time to look back and reflect on our accomplishments, experiences, and most importantly, our relationship with the Supreme Being."

"If we see the mistakes we've made, we can avoid making the same errors again. A foolish person puts his finger in the flame and gets burned repeatedly; a sane man learns his lesson and avoids the dangers that threaten stability."

Rainbow

"Just as we can't hold on to a rainbow, we can't hold on to time. We can't hold on to youth, just as we can't hold on to each passing year."

"Time flies quickly for those who fill each moment with meaningful work. It trickles slowly for those who see no purpose in living."

"Those who make good use of their time are those who have realized the value and purpose of human existence."

"Lazy people waste time, the foolish waste opportunities, and the selfish waste resources. But, people who lose their way waste their lives."

"A man's greatness is not measured by material resources, but by spiritual wisdom and bliss."

"You can't stop the passing of time, but you can change how your life runs."

LOTUS POND



R. Valencia and S. Bismark

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MATAKOT KA SA KARMA PG13
1:30, 3:40, 5:50, 8:00, 10:10

MANO PO 5: GUA AI DI G
12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30

ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH G
1:40, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:20

KASAL, KASALI, KASALO PG13
1:40, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:20

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3 **6 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA**

2 KASAL KASALI KASALO **7 MANO PO 5**

3 LIGALIG **8 SUPER NOYPI**

4 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH **9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3**

5 TATLONG BARAHA **10 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8**

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INDIE FILMMAKERS hope for better harvest in 2007

By Rica Arevalo

THE YEAR 2006 SAW independent filmmakers rule local award-giving bodies and make waves in film festivals abroad. For 2007, here are their wishes:

Benjie Garcia (director of "Batad"): "More enthusiastic producers with bigger budgets. And a bigger audience for independent films!"

Dennis Marasigan ("Sa North Division Road"): "To make more films with a bigger chance of being seen by more people. A stronger and sustainable Independent Filmmakers Cooperative with wide membership and more support."

Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil ("Mga Pusang Gala"): "Let a thousand flowers bloom, bloom and bloom!"

Raymond Lee (producer of "Maximo Oliveros"): "A steady production of better films, a viable alternative distribution system, and a bigger local audience."

Commitment

Paolo Villaluna ("Ilusyon"): "I wish the indie community would not waiver in its commitment to make brave, fresh, and challenging films that underscore self-expression, advocacy and social responsibility. I wish for more unity despite our diversity and different ideologies."

Doy del Mundo ("Pepot Artista"): "Sana'y huwag makalimutan ang tunay na spirit ng indie filmmaking, at sana'y huwag lumaki ang



DEL MUNDO. Urges everyone not to forget the true spirit of independent filmmaking.

ulo ng ilang successful indie filmmakers."

Adolfo Alix Jr. ("Don-sol"): "For the community to do more films, to continue to work as a team, and to push the envelope of moviemaking despite limited resources."

Development

Also, may our audience grow, patronize, and understand this exciting movement not as a flash in a pan, but as an ongoing development for the growth of Philippine cinema."

Ditsi Carolino ("Bunso"): "More theatrical distribution of documentary films, para lalo pang lumaki ang audience. I hope gumanda pa lalo ang content ng mga pelikula para kapag natuwa ang audience, patronage would spread. If we use good projectors in cinemas, then digital would no longer be considered the 'poorer cousin' of the 35mm film."

SATURDAYSpecial

An enchanted evening with Tita, Nikki, Jesi, Pilita, Angie and other friends-for-life

By Nestor U. Torre

OUR ADMIRATION FOR legendary actress and industry icon Tita Muñoz knows no bounds. We appreciate not just her superlative thespic talent, but also her wisdom and fortitude. Now 80 years old, Tita is wheelchair-bound and has to contend with major health issues that would confound and defeat most people.

And yet, Tita sustains her optimistic view of life and shining faith in God—a sterling example for all people with major problems of their own to face and master.

Magical way

For this reason, we treasure our occasional days in and nights out with Tita, who has a magical way of making an ordinary evening special.

Most recently, we took her to the Music Museum to catch a performance of the New Voice Company's staging of Eve Ensler's "The Good Body," starring Monique Wilson, Pinky Amador and Juno Henares.

Problem: Tita was in a wheelchair, and it wasn't clear how access to the theater could be arranged. Happily, play director Rito Asilo offered an inspired if unusual solution: He asked three members of the stage crew to help us lift Tita and her wheelchair up the Music Museum's many steps, so she could enjoy the show.

Tita was effusively appreciative and had a great time watching the play. She was heard exclaiming that it had revived her own interest in acting! When we heard this, we were overjoyed, because we've always wanted today's theater buffs to savor Tita's luminous talent, if only in a reading, so they can revise their standard of excellence—upwards! Will we finally get our wish early next year?

Most rewarding

After the play, Tita invited us to take a post-theater snack at Pilita Corrales' bistro and café, just a stone's throw away from Music Museum. Thus began the even more enchanting phase of our already most re-

MUÑOZ. Admired for her luminous talent, wisdom and fortitude.



CORRALES. Never too tired to surprise her bistro's patrons with a song.

MENDEZ. Ace stylist enjoys well-deserved success.

warding evening.

At Pilita's, a veritable reunion of old friends ensued, and Tita beamed with de-

light. Nikki Ross and Angie Yoinco, the celebrated Wing Duo, were first to greet our mutual friend.

Angie, the daughter of our much loved and missed Katy dela Cruz, was visiting from the States, and shared that she and Nikki had just guested on the "Walang Tulugan" show of German Moreno, another old chum.

Tita was also delighted when Jesi Mendez arrived and greeted her with warmth and genuine friendship.

An onlooker informed us that the ace stylist now has 10 salons to his name, and is riding the crest of well-deserved success in his field. Even better, that success has definitely not gone to his head.

Ever the caring friend, Jesi toasted Tita, and they made plans to see each other soonest.

Unexpected musical treat

Finally, Pilita Corrales herself arrived from an evening performance. Despite her feeling a bit winded, she sang some songs for the people at her bistro, who were blown away by the unexpected musical treat. That's how much Pilita loves her café, and is working hard to make it a singular success.

The company was great, the reminiscences were scintillating, but it was getting really late, so Tita bade her friends adieu—but not for long, we trust. Friends-for-life like Tita, Jesi, Pilita, Nikki and Angie are too precious to be taken for granted, and should enjoy their maturing years "growing wiser" together!

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MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40

MANO PO 5
1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00

MALL 5

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
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ENTENG KABISOTE 3
11:10 R3 / 1:00 / 3:30 / 6:00 / 8:30

3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNAH
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4 SUPER NOYPI
11:10 / 1:30 / 3:50 / 6:10 / 8:30

5 LIGALIG
12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30

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Editor **Nestor U. Torre**
Assistant Editor **Rito P. Asilo**

Alaska Pasta

INGREDIENTS:

3	pcs	Vegan longanisa
2	tbsp	olive oil
1	tbsp	garlic, chopped
1	tbsp	white onion, chopped
1	tbsp	parmesan cheese
1/4	cup	red & green bell pepper,
	cup	sliced
1/4	cup	white wine
1/2	cup	soup stock
1/2	pack	ALASKA CREMA ALL-PURPOSE CREAM
200	grms	Fettuccine pasta, al
		dente cooked
3	pcs	garlic bread

PROCEDURE:

1. Boil Vegan longanisa and remove skin. Sauté in olive oil until crisp. Set aside.
2. Sauté garlic, white onion, red and green bell pepper, salt and pepper to taste.
3. Add soup stock and white wine. Add cooked pasta and season to taste. Add ALASKA CREMA ALL-PURPOSE CREAM into the pasta.
4. Remove from heat and put in serving plate.
5. Top the sautéed Vegan longanisa and parmesan cheese.
6. Serve with garlic bread.

Makes 1 serving.

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2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 10:45 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00	7 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
3 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8 10:30 1:20 4:10 7:00 9:50	8 SUPER NOYPI 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
4 MANO PO 5 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00	9 TATLONG BARAHA 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00	10 LIGALIG 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

ERMITA 536-7800 to 12

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3 10:10 12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00	5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA 10:30 12:25 2:20 4:15 8:10 10:00
2 LIGALIG 10:20 12:25 2:50 5:05 7:25 9:50	6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH 10:20 12:25 2:50 5:05 7:25 10:00	7 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8 10:30 1:20 4:10 7:00 9:50
4 MANO PO 5 10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	

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1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10	5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA 10:50 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3 11:25 1:55 4:25 6:55 9:20	6 MANO PO 5 10:20 1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH 10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05	7 LIGALIG 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
4 SUPER NOYPI 11:20 1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00	8 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8 10:40 1:20 4:00 6:40 9:10

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1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8 2 SUPER NOYPI 3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3 4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA	5 MANO PO 5 6 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH 7 LIGALIG 8 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
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1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3 3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	
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1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3 3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	
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1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3 3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	
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1 MANO PO - 5 2 TATLONG BARAHA 3 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH 4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
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1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3 2 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)	
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True love and high camp

From page F1

it is—a highly entertaining and absurdly hilarious farce that dramatizes a deceptively “weak” man’s quest to rid his planet of evil beings—and to overcome his fears.

Lamangan compresses the protracted but otherwise highly entertaining stage musical into a fast-paced and amusing motion picture, but the movie is missing the spontaneity and laugh-a-second humor of its stage version.

Moreover, miscasting is another problem: Zsa Zsa, while ravishingly beautiful, looks too old for her role, while Ruston lacks vulnerability and looks too awkward. But, here’s a pleasant surprise: We’ve

never liked Pops Fernandez as a singer or actress, but, despite a now-you-hear-it-now-you-don’t English accent, she is surprising good as the queen of the plastic-like Amazonistas, a role that Agot Isidro created—albeit not too successfully—on the legitimate stage.

The movie reminds you of Armando Garces’ “Darna Versus the Planet Women” (starring Vilma Santos) and the Pinky Montilla-starrer “Supergirl.” You might find it inferior to Chris Millado’s stage version, but if you haven’t been to any of its runs, the big-screen version should suffice.

Despite its shortcomings, “Zsa Zsa” makes for a fun, gay night at the movies.

From action

From page F4

comedy, “I Wanna Be Happy,” is now a GMA Records Home Video release. Gloria Romero and Eddie Garcia play a couple married for 50 long years, who suddenly decide to split up! Cherry Pie Picache, Joey Marquez and Diana Zubiri play their children, who are caught offguard by their parents’ “instant” marital woes.

Barry Manilow

Barry Manilow’s latest album, “The Greatest Songs of the Sixties” is a certified hit. It includes pop classics like “Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head,” “What the World Needs Now Is Love,” “There’s A Kind of Hush,” “Can’t Take My Eyes Off You,” “Cherish,” “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feeling,” “When I Fall in Love” and “Windy.”

‘Sa North Diversion Road’

Dennis Marasigan’s digital feature, “Sa North Diversion Road,” is now a Star Records Video release. In the film, Irma Adlawan and John Arcilla play a couple in a car enacting 10 different scenes, each one a different take on the man’s infidelity.

‘Mega Builders’

Every Thursday at 11 p.m. beginning Jan. 25, Discovery Channel telecasts “Mega Builders,” taking viewers to construction sites in Thailand, the United States, Switzerland, Spain and Canada. The Jan. 25 episode, “Mega Bridge” zeroes in on the construction of the Bangkok Mega Bridge, actually two bridges designed to span a loop of the Chao Phraya River.

Golden harvest

Three Universal Records album releases have been certified gold. They are Sponge Cola’s “Bitiw,” Shamrock’s “Are You Serious?” and “The Mark Herras Dance Party.”

Trip to Greece

Loyal SkyCable subscriber Fe Pimentel recently went on an all-expense-paid trip for two to Greece in SkyCable and Star Movies’ “Live the Bond Life” raffle promo. Five other subscribers won Sony Ericsson mobile phones, and 20 got Nike and Makati Shangri-La gift certificates.

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Formulaic effort from outrageous band

By Noelani Torre

THE PICTURE ON THE COVER of "Black Holes and Revelations," Muse's new album—showing four guys sitting around a table on the surface of what looks like the planet Mars—is a little spaced-out: The tiny horses on the tabletop are a particularly nice touch, and equally bizarre is the disc's chosen title.

But, it's when you actually hear their offbeat approach to rock that you'll see how deep their sense of the preposterous runs. Muse doesn't sound like your typical rock band, that's for sure.

In fact, they sound like an amalgamation of bands like Depeche Mode and Radiohead. These guys have a good ear for hooks and Romantic-era sensibility.

Over the top

Hailing from Devon, UK, this threesome is made up of guitarist/vocalist Matthew Bellamy, bassist Chris Wolstenholme, and drummer Dominic Howard. They've been playing together since they were kids—and it shows. Outlandish and over the top it may be, but their latest effort is really a strong, solid record at heart.

The songs are cunningly constructed with all sorts of sounds layered on top of one another, and major hooks that will reel you in and refuse to let you go.

There are also enough eccen-



tric touches here and there—like a Spanish guitar and the sound of galloping horses—to keep old fans happy.

Outrageousness is something that people look for in any Muse record. If it doesn't sound layered, or have completely odd-sounding song-titles like "Supermassive Black Hole" and "Knights of Cydonia," then it won't sound like Muse at all!

Problem

The problem with this is that after a couple of years and a few albums—from 1999's "Showbiz" to 2001's "The Origin of Symmetry" and 2003's "Absolution"—this trying-not-to-sound-

MUSE. Good ear for hooks and Romantic-era sensibility.

formulaic tack starts to sound, well, formulaic. All the melodic inventions and stylistic flourishes start to sound like something

they've done before.

It wouldn't have mattered if there was indeed something beneath all that sound and fury. But, unfortunately for them, their lyrics are practically hysterical.

Suffering

Suffering from purple wording and blunt-as-a-sledgehammer sentiments, they detract from the album's overall quality.

The trick here would be to turn a semi-deaf ear to the words and to just listen to the music. Muse may not know how to write ala Radiohead, but these guys sure know how to hit the right notes!

Cinemalaya 2007 shapes up . . .

From page F1

strength and reputation—not resting on past laurels, but building on them to achieve greater heights.

This impression was further bolstered when the 10 finalist screenplays were chosen earlier this month. Many strong filmmakers' entries had again survived the cut, along with the screenplays of new but similarly

gifted proponents. This indicated that the 2007 competition should be particularly strong.

We're gratified that some of the finalists present the country's youth in arrestingly new light. Two of the entries we pushed from the start, without knowing their proponents, were Solito's "Pisay" and Yamamoto-

Jade Castro's "Endo."

We liked "Pisay" because it was about life in the Philippine Science High School, and showed Filipino teenagers not as the lazy ga-ga dolts they're depicted as in mainstream movies and on many TV shows.

And we pushed for "Endo" because it was similarly important

in our book, since it tackled the sad reality of millions of young Filipinos who work at dead-end jobs lasting only six months or so.

We trust that these and other worthy finalists in the competition will turn out to be superlative movies that will help truly liberate Filipino independent cinema and its growing audience.

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G4	GLOBE 4	1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	2 LIGALIG	3 TATLONG BARAHA	4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
GB1	GREENBELT 1	1 ZSA ZSA ZATURNAH	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3		
GB3	GREENBELT 3	1 SUPER NOYPI	2 MANO PO 5		
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA	2 MANO PO 5		
ACC	AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 SUPER NOYPI	2 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
M2	MARKET! MARKET!	1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3		

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December 23	University of the East Chorale
December 30	Adventist University of the Philippines Chorale

Cesar offers alternative viewing option



MONTANO. Acts, directs and produces the MMFF entry, "Ligalig."

By Remy M. Umerez

DURING THE PRESS CONFERENCE for the suspense thriller, "Ligalig," someone asked actor-director Cesar Montano why his Metro Manila Film Festival entry is so different from the other competing movies, which are mostly geared for kids.

"It's only in our country where a film festival caters to children. This is not the case in most international film fests I have attended, where the subject matter is geared for mature audiences."

No objection

"Don't get me wrong. I have no objection to fantasy films, and there are economic reasons behind this. The situation is understandable because of the sad state of the local movie industry today. What I'm offering is an alternative to fantasy or horror," he explained.

"Ligalig" is a psychological thriller in the mold of "The Silence of the Lambs." The cast is mostly made up of the actor's friends who were willing to act in the project for a song.

Cesar couldn't think of a better actor to play his character's father than Johnny Delga-

do. Meanwhile, the role of the smart house-help landed on the lap of Rebecca Lusterio.

"She was discovered by Marilou Diaz-Abaya when we did 'Muro Ami.' In that movie, a girl was pretending to be a boy in order to be allowed to dive. Magaling siya talaga, so every time I produce a film, I see to it that she gets a role," Cesar muses.

Alvin Anson plays a police investigator who tracks down Cesar, the suspected serial killer. He was also in "The Great Raid," but he didn't have any scene with Montano. This time, Alvin gets his wish to act with Cesar.

Sidekick

Bayani Agbayani used to be Cesar's sidekick in earlier films. Montano considers the comedian his lucky charm.

Sunshine Cruz, on the other hand, is both actress and line producer of "Ligalig." She "fought" Cesar for using a real spider, which she hates, and making it to crawl on her face in one of the chase scenes.

The actress reveals that she would rather jump from a tall building than have anything to do with spiders. She plays the nurse-girlfriend of Cesar, a crucial character who holds the key to the mystery.

John Regala and Hotbabes Katya Santos and Gwen Garci appear in cameo roles.

From action star to babysitter

MARTIAL ARTS ICON JACKIE Chan turns his action hero image on its head and plays a babysitter in his surprising, new starrer, "Rob-B-Hood." He's cast as a compulsive gambler who hits on

MONTAGE taking care of a baby to fend off his debtors. The big problem is, can he overcome his phobia for diapers, milk bottles and sweet lullabies?

With the assistance of a nurse and his landlord's baby-crazy wife, the gambler-turned-babysitter experiences a measure of success—but not for long. Baby BB turns out to be the grandson of a tycoon, and is being held by the Triad for a hefty ransom.

But, when his sitters learn that the Triad also wants to do the cute tyke in, they refuse to hand him over, as originally agreed upon.

Cornered by cops and threatened by ferocious gangsters, BB's protector embark on a dangerous, but funny escape and escape to put BB safely back in his cradle.

Toys 'R' Us at Metro East

Teen celebrities Maja Salvador and Gerald Anderson graced the recent opening of the fabulous toy paradise, Toys 'R' Us, at the lower ground floor of Robinson's Place, Metro East. The more than 800 sqm store's own mascot, Geoffrey, helped them welcome the crowd.

The store's seven zones are Toys for Girls, Boys, Babies 'R' Us, Universe of Imagination, R-Zone, Family Fun, and Sports and Outdoor. International toy brand and private labels like You and Me, Fast Lane, Edu Science and Bruin abound. Toys 'R' Us can also be found at Robinson's Galleria and Robinson's Place Lipa.

Short film

Fil-Norwegian Lara Myrvang's short film, "Old Boys with New Tricks," will be screened at the UP Film Institute Videotheque at 7 p.m. on Jan. 5. In the 11-minute movie, four old men try to escape from the evil caretakers at the Dream Sanctuary Retirement Home.

'World at War'

At 9 p.m. on Jan. 7, Cinemax screens "Left Behind III: World at War," starring Lou Gossett Jr. as the US president at a tumultuous future time when the rumored Anti-Christ threatens to invade the United States.

'Innocent Voices'

Ayala Malls cinemas will exclusively screen Berlin film festival winner, "Innocent Voices," which tells the poignant tale of an 11-year-old El Salvadoran boy who suddenly becomes the



CHAN. Topbills "Rob-B-Hood."

"man of the house" after his father abandons the family in the middle of a civil war.

Amazingly, the boy finds the courage to keep his spirit alive before he's conscripted as a young soldier in the escalating war.

A review exults: "Filmmaker Luis Mandoki has crafted a raw, powerful portrait of childhood spent in a war zone."

Movies on TV

On HBO, Jan. 1 at 10:15 a.m., "Wimbledon." Jan. 2 at 8 a.m., "Fahrenheit 9/11." Jan. 3 at noontime, "Broken Flowers." Jan. 4 at 9:45 a.m., "Homeland Security." Jan. 5 at 11 p.m., "Twilight Zone, The Movie."

On Cinemax, Jan. 1 at 11:10 a.m., "The Bad News Bears." Jan. 2 at 1:40 p.m., "Little Fauss and Big Halsey." Jan. 3 at 3:30 p.m., "Catch-22." 7 p.m., "Carlito's Way." Jan. 4 at 6 a.m., "Jason and the Argonauts." Jan. 5 at 8 a.m., "Alfie" (1966). 1:50 p.m., "Arabesque."

ManoMano

ManoMano Fair Trade Store, a unique showcase of beautiful handicrafts from all over the Philippines, ends its Christmas Sale on Jan. 6. ManoMano is on Lamayan st. in Sta. Ana, near the Our Lady of the Abandoned Church.

MGM Channel highlights

Jan. 1 at 9 p.m., "Benny & Joon" with Johnny Depp and Mary Stuart Masterson. Jan. 2 at 9 p.m., "A Prayer for the Dying" with Mickey Rourke and Liam Neeson. Jan. 19 at 9 p.m., "Untamed Heart" with Christian Slater and Marissa Tomei.

Fruitcake of socialites and stars

There are fruitcakes and fruitcakes, but socialites and stars make a beeline for Ju D Lao's creative concoctions, made only with the finest ingredients. This season, the Fruitcake Lady's selections include Ju D Blue (made with Blue Mountain coffee and a touch of Kahlua), Ju D Gold (a two-layered fruitcake combining molasses for the dark side and honey for the light portion), Ginger Cranberry, and the Classic Ju D. Call 633-0260.

'I Wanna Be Happy'

Seiko Films' rollicking family FROM/F2

Priests in media make up for 'inadequacies' of Catholic press

By Lilia Borlongan-Alvarez

MEMBERS OF THE FILIPINO CLERGY ZEALOUS in their apostolate in print and broadcast media have certainly made up for "inadequacies" of the Catholic press.

Using the media to preach the gospel, and instruct and guide the faithful, these priests have cared for people's souls by using their unique styles, whether at the pulpit as they deliver homilies, on television, or in their columns in newspapers:

Fr. Bel San Luis, SVD. Fr. Bel writes a column, and hosts a radio program, "Salitang Buhay," on dzMM every Sunday evening. The program invites other priests, religious lay leaders, catechists, and members of Catholic organizations to share their stories of conversion.

Books

He is also the author of several books, among them "Word Alive," which explains the Sunday gospel in the three liturgical cycles. In these books, he offers practical applications about living one's faith and practicing God's word, and he punctuates them with humorous stories. His homilies revolve around



ORBOS AND FARAON. Use unique styles to preach the Gospel.

amusing stories that illustrate how Christians are a disgrace to one another.

His other books, "Stories of Life and Laughter" and "Some More Stories of Life and Laughter," are collections of short stories designed to help preachers, speakers and teachers "reflect about spiritual truths and realities."

Catch him celebrating healing masses on local channels every Sunday morning or at Christ the King Seminary in Quezon City, or email him at belsvd@skyinet.net.

Self-deprecating humor

Fr. Larry Faraon. Fr. Larry's homilies are spiced up with self-deprecating humor. What's nice about him is, he never drifts away from the message of the Gospel. He hosted a daily radio program, "Sounds of the Soul," on dwBM FM for seven years, where he shared his reflections that inspired listeners to take the Christian perspective in the midst of the evils of society.

He also used to host the radio program, "Signs and Wonders," on Radio Veritas. On the ABS-CBN network, he hosted "Ang Payo ni Father," where he read letters from and dispensed spiritual advice to troubled souls.

Fr. Faraon is now based in Singapore, whose Catholics number about 156,000 (mostly converts from Buddhism and Hinduism), and where he teaches pastoral theology in a seminary. In the evening, he ministers charismatic groups.

Asked how he finds his life in the affluent city state, he says, "Only a semi-recluse like me can enjoy the peace and tranquility of Singapore."

Happily, his work allows him to come home to Manila every month. You can catch his masses every first Sunday of the month at the garden of Max's Restaurant on Scout Tuazon in Quezon City. Email him at larryfaraon@yahoo.com.

Sunday column

Fr. Jerry Orbos, SVD. Fr. Jerry writes a Sunday column for this paper. He gives in-your-face advice on how to live as true Christians. He also attacks insincere politicians with a selfish agenda.

He has written several books ("Moments," "Light Moments," "Simple Moments" and "Shared Moments") which tell heartwarming stories. His Fr. Jerry Text-a-Moment service enables the priest to extend his daily ministry to cell phone subscribers.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit #5517, Series of 2006

Special visit

RECENTLY, THE ASSOCIATION of Former Flight Attendants of Philippine Airlines (Affap) visited Carmen Madrid, 80, in her residence at 272 San Rafael st., San Miguel at the Malacañang compound.

Along with Christmas carols, the group brought food and sparkling champagne to celebrate the holiday season with Carmen, who was the cabin attendant dispatcher when we were PAL flight attendants.

In 1946, Madrid boarded flights at the Nielsen Airport. DC3s then had bucket seats (made of cushionless metals). The aircrafts' metal floors used to hurt her feet.

Four passengers

Madrid happily narrated that at one time, four passengers asked her for dates, so she gave the addresses of four different flight attendants. When male passengers

STREET SMART



Mandy Navasero

would pester her on the ground, she would say: "Up there I would serve you, but down here is another story!"

Once, Carmen was assigned to a Hong Kong flight that was delayed. Instead, she was ordered to fly to Zamboanga. She was looking forward to flying to Hong Kong, but when the flight finally pushed through, another attendant was assigned to take her place. By the time she came back to Manila, the Hong Kong flight had crashed!

TV interview

She became the first woman supervisor of the airlines' maintenance department. In a tearful TV interview in 1972, when Marcos declared martial law, she said: "As long as PAL flies with the Philippine flag on its tail, our country will be okay!"

These days, Carmen loves to read mystery books. She still chuckles with fondness at stories told and retold about our flying days. She calls me "Life Vest Navasero."

Tears were shed at the end of that special visit, but it was a happy reunion with our beloved Carmen Madrid.



MADRID. Fond memories.

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Date: Dec. 29, 2006 to Jan. 03, 2007, 4:00 pm/7:30 pm

Ticket prices: P1550, P1250, P950, P550 (plus Ticketnet commission)

Family package: buy 5 tickets and get 1 free

SHOW SCHEDULE

Dec. 29 4:00 pm 7:30 pm	Dec. 31 No Show	Jan. 2 1:00 pm 4:00 pm
Dec. 30 4:00 pm 7:30 pm	Jan. 1 4:00 pm 7:30 pm	Jan. 3 7:30 pm